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FOR ALL PRISONERS AND CAPTIVES.

BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE ASTON:

I REMEMBER once hearing a Dutch-speaking South African lady say, during a discussion on bi-lingualism:

‘Try and remember your own youthful associations, especially impressions gathered in the home in which you lived as a child, and then think what it means to a South African of Dutch ancestry if he gets the idea into his head that the language of his Bible and his Prayer Book is in danger of extinction.’

In early years it is not so much the actual meaning of the words or phrases expressed in one's mother-tongue, but the ring of them, that remains in the mind, and the surroundings of home in which they were first heard. It may not be until half a century afterwards, when experience has been won, that the true meaning is revealed to us, and then some rolling sentence is suddenly found to voice a thought that seems to well up from the deepest springs in one's being, a thought that one's own imperfect mastery of language would leave unexpressed, and so unrecorded. As illustrating the attitude of the youthful mind, most families treasure up records of rather startling effects produced upon children by the language of the Prayer Book and Bible. In my own personal experience the only example that occurs to me for the moment is my own feeling of rebellion against praying to be ‘prevented’ in all my doings, but I remember resigning myself to the idea that in a mysterious way it must be some operation for my ultimate benefit, however obscure and connected with the usual attitude of ‘grown-ups’ towards any proposals that originated in my own personal sense of enterprise. Another example. The mother of a small friend of mine told me some time ago that the child had asked her whether the ‘trespasses’ in the Lord's Prayer were the ‘pussies in our square.’ Another case happened quite lately to a near relative,

a mother who hoped to stimulate the memory of her small boy in the nursery by reading him a story in Bible language one morning, and asking him to repeat it to her the next day in his own words. The story of the Prodigal Son was well remembered, but with the startling announcement 'and he *loved* to eat the swine's rusk.''

In his 'Art of Writing' Sir A. Quiller-Couch holds up the language of the Prayer Book as the finest prose in the English tongue, and makes the suggestion that the little company of divines to whom we are indebted for its wording must have owed much to inspiration. If his opinion did not appeal to all the Cambridge undergraduates to whom he lectured, I can confidently assert that it would appeal to every officer and man of His Majesty's Navy who constantly listen, standing on the heaving deck of one of H.M. ships at sea, to the sonorous roll of the words, 'O Eternal Lord God, who alone spreadest out the heavens and rulest the raging of the sea, who hast compassed the waters with bounds until day and night come to an end.' But the part of the Prayer Book to which I want to refer specially is the Litany, which most of us heard often in our youth, even if we have not heard it very often in our lives afterwards. At the church I was taken to as a boy we used to have it every Sunday, and well I remember that long morning service, and the discipline of having to keep quiet for nearly two hours, listening to what I sometimes felt to be tiresome digressions from matters of immediate interest—such as a butterfly, usually a small tortoise-shell, on the window, or a spider making a web in a corner—but some of the words of the Litany have a very definite meaning in these days. 'From plague, pestilence, and famine; from battle, murder, and sudden death. . . . From all sedition, privy conspiracy, and rebellion . . . ' and the climax, 'In all time of our tribulation; in all time of our wealth; in the hour of death, and in the day of judgement, *Good Lord, deliver us.*' And then again, 'That it may please thee to endue the Lords of the Council, and all the Nobility, with grace, wisdom, and understanding. . . . That it may please thee to give to all nations unity, peace, and concord; . . . That it may please thee to succour, help, and comfort, all that are in danger, necessity, and tribulation; . . . That it may please thee to defend, and provide for, the fatherless children, and widows, and all that are desolate and oppressed,' . . . and, 'That it may please thee to preserve all that travel by land or by water, all women labouring of child, all sick persons, and young children; and to *show thy pity upon all prisoners and captives*;

We beseech thee to hear us, good Lord.' How remote most of those evils seemed from us four years ago! Such phrases seemed to pass over our heads in a flood of beautiful prose and vowel-sounds, without much personal application, but now they strike down to the very marrow.

A few more words about personal memories, before passing to a question many of us have so much at heart in these times. On a certain evening in the winter of 1900 we were trekking in the eastern part of the Orange Free State during the South African War, when a number of Boer prisoners were brought into our camp. Being very short of transport, the men of the Division with which I was serving only had three blankets between every two men; one battalion had less, because one of their ox-wagons had stuck in a drift; in such weather I have known, in later years, as many as four blankets per man to be allowed when lying out in the open in the same country during peace manœuvres. We had about 18 degrees of frost at night, and water was frozen solid to the bottom of pails by morning. The British soldiers not only took every care not in any way to hurt the feelings of the prisoners, even by staring at them, but they did all they possibly could to make their lot as easy as possible. They gave them blankets from their own scanty store, and, when we trekked forward the next day, the authorities allowed the prisoners, who were going the opposite way, to keep the blankets with them. That was in the days when a halo of chivalry still lingered over warfare, before the Huns had revived the boundless violence and terrorism of the Middle Ages, combined with skilfully devised torture of women and children, and the most ghastly cruelty to prisoners and captives rendered helpless by the vicissitudes of warfare.

Let us imagine some of those vicissitudes for a moment. In these days of enormous armies all sorts of things may happen to individual men, to whole platoons, or even to much larger units, and often to the most gallant of them. Take, for instance, the historic retreat of the little old British regular army from Mons. They numbered 80,000 in all. The fortunes of war found them on the extreme left of a line of battle extending all the way to the frontier of Switzerland. There was a gap of many miles on their right, through which von Bülow's hosts of the 2nd German Army were pouring. The British Army was attacked in front by von Klück's 1st German Army, which at the same time was turning their left flank. Withdrawal was difficult. Communications were cut

in many places, and it was impossible to get orders to every little unit. Some of the men were cut off. I saw a good many of them, who were lucky enough to lie hidden while the German hosts poured past in the rush to the southward, which was intended to carry them to Paris and to victory. These men somehow or other managed to remain concealed, and, walking by night, steered by the North Star, knowing that it would lead them to the Belgian coast. They ultimately reached that coast, ragged, emaciated, and footsore, with the one idea of getting back to the remains of the battered battalions in which their whole soul was bound up. I shall never forget them, or the way in which they proudly held out their identity discs, all that remained to them of their equipment as British soldiers, and asked how they could get back to their regiments. They just caught a steamer leaving Ostend for Folkestone, and it did not take many days to fit them up and send them back to the front again. But those were the lucky ones. There have been accounts about others in CORNHILL, in other magazines, and many books; many of us know more from private letters and from personal tales. Government publications also help us to realise the fate of those who fell in the hands of the Germans during those early months of the war, when the Great General Staff had intentionally worked up their nation and their army to such a pitch of frenzied and unreasoning hatred against 'England' and the 'English'; in the days before we held more of their officers and men as prisoners than they held of ours,—before they feared reprisals.

Amongst such accounts I can mention articles in CORNHILL, 'Beating back from Germany' (February 1917), 'A Canadian at Ypres' (November and December 1917), 'A Prisoner of War in Germany' (May 1918), and 'Home from a German Prisoners' Camp' in the September number. Then, amongst many other books, we have 'Experiences in German Gaols,' by L. H. Marshall (1915, Simpkin, price 6d.); 'In the Hands of the Enemy,' by Benjamin O'Rorke (1915, Longmans, price 1s.); 'Journal d'un simple soldat : guerre captivité 1914-15,' by Gaston Riou (Hachette, price 3.50 fr.). These personal accounts hold a great human interest, but so also do many Government white books and blue books, which we shun in time of peace on account of the dry and official jargon in which their information is generally disguised. In war time they are quite different documents. Amongst those which enable us to picture the lives of prisoners captured in battle there are Cd. 7815,

7817, and 7861, which refer to our own treatment of German prisoners, as explained to the Ambassador of the United States; Cd. 7862, which tells about the treatment of prisoners both in England and in Germany during the first eight months of the war; Cd. 7863, the report by the American Ambassador on Ruhleben Camp; Cd. 7959, 7961, and 8108, which tell us about the treatment of British prisoners of war in Germany. All these contain a wealth of material, and I believe that there is another one, of great importance, now being prepared. Space does not permit me to quote details from so many long documents. In the early days our enemies had—for the time—been victorious in the field. At such moments national characteristics are put severely to the test. The strength and greatness of a nation is shown, no doubt, in times of adversity, but even more so in times of triumph. A nation that is not magnanimous at such times must be rotten to the core. Making all allowances for the deliberate way in which the Great General Staff, in league with the industrial magnates of Germany, misled their people about the designs of neighbouring countries, and turned them for the time into hate-loving savages in order to use them as the instruments of 'economic development,' many of the representatives of German officialdom proved their true characters by their treatment of British prisoners.

I want now to concentrate upon two official reports, to which I have not yet referred. The first of these is the evidence placed before the Bryce Commission upon Belgian Atrocities,¹ because there we find tales which enable us to picture to ourselves the fate of some of the heroes of our little old army who fell into the hands of the Germans in moments of their temporary triumph in battle.

I think that the names of Lord Bryce and his fellow-commissioners afford sufficient guarantee that their case is not overstated. They explain ² that they were met with some peculiar difficulties in forming their judgment, because the acts about which they obtained evidence may not in all cases have been deliberate and cold-blooded violations of the usages of war. The evidence appended to their report is a document of great value to psychologists engaged upon studying the motives underlying human depravity. It shows how attempts to evolve by human endeavour the Super-Man have so far resulted only in evolving a Super-Beast, with the mental attributes of a super-intelligent fiend. If time and

¹ See Appendix to Bryce Commission Report, 1915. H.M. Stationery Office. 6d.
See page 56-8 of the Bryce Report.

space were at my disposal I should like to quote several examples in support of this view, notably one giving details of the brutal torture of a British soldier by twelve German cavalymen, because of the spirit of the man who describes his sufferings. He touches lightly upon the illness following his treatment, and ends his recital with the words, 'I have got much better and expect to go to the front soon.' His whole account bears the stamp of truth, but there could, in the circumstances, be no corroborative evidence, so I select the following recital by a British lance-corporal, not because it reaches the average in brutality, but because the evidence was corroborated by that of an officer and a private taken separately and independently. This is the story in the man's own words :

'On September 14 last (1914) my company was engaged with the enemy in the valley of the river Aisne. Early in the morning, at about eight or nine o'clock, I was wounded in the left knee and took shelter in a chalk pit. During the day twelve other men came in, all of whom were wounded. Of these, two were officers, one being Lieut. G—— of my own regiment, and the other, I believe, was a subaltern in one of the regiments of Guards. These two officers each had a pistol, but none of the other wounded men in the pit had arms of any sort.

'The British force fell back, and by four or five o'clock in the afternoon three of the wounded men had died and others appeared to be bleeding to death. Therefore, when we heard the approach of the Germans we decided to attract their attention in order that we might get medical assistance. One of the officers happened to have a white handkerchief, and this the officer, whom I believe to have belonged to the Guards, marked with a cross in blood and tied to a folding combination stick-seat. The same officer then held up this flag and in this way attracted the attention of a party of about eight Germans.

'At this time the wounded in the chalk pit were not grouped together, but were scattered about the pit, lying or sitting in the position which gave each one most ease. With the exception of the officer holding up the flag none of us had anything in his hands. The Germans came up to the edge of the pit ; it was getting dusk, but the light was still good, and everything clearly discernible. One of the Germans, who appeared to be carrying no arms and who at any rate had no rifle, came a few feet down the slope into the chalk pit. He came to within 8 or 10 yards of some of the wounded men. He looked at the men, laughed, and said something in German to the Germans who were waiting on the edge of the pit.

'Immediately one of them fired at the Guards officer ; then

three or four of us were shot; then Lieut. G——; then myself and the rest of us. I was shot in the right shoulder. After an interval of some time I sat up and found that I was the only man of the ten who were living when the Germans came into the pit, remaining alive and that all the rest were dead. Later, a soldier named D—— of my company came to the pit, and I at once told him what had happened. He bound up my shoulder, and early in the morning of September 15 I managed to get to a picket of the Welsh Border Regiment. I told Lieut. D—— of that regiment, and also the Medical Officer who attended to me, the story of what had occurred.¹

That German methods of cold-blooded cruelty have since become worse is proved by the accounts issued by the Ministry of Information of their having turned jets of liquid fire upon helpless British wounded prisoners on March 28, 1918.

Such accounts are horrible, but they are accounts of killing outright without the mental torture or prolonged and painful martyrdom, of which the Bryce evidence provides many examples. The fact that many helpless British wounded have been killed by the Germans in cold blood has been established by ample official evidence. I will now trace the experiences of some of the grievously wounded British prisoners on their way to Germany. The following evidence is furnished by a neutral, M. Mokveld, the distinguished Dutch journalist who was travelling in Belgium in the early months of the war. His recital throws some light upon the appallingly savage and cruel brutality of German soldiers, and adds a strong incentive to all free nations to combine and hurl them out of Belgian and French territory. Only their dishonourable breach of a treaty obligation enabled them to occupy that territory originally, and the time is approaching when German armies will be forced in disgrace across the frontiers they crossed four years ago in dishonour.

M. Mokveld writes ²:—

‘We arrived at Landen, a place between Tirlemont and Waremmé, where we had a stop of forty minutes, in order to feed the wounded. Soup was served from large washing-tubs, and I and my small companion were also offered some of this soldiers’ food. When I had finished my meal, and walked up and down the platform in order to stretch my legs, my attention was drawn to an uproar in front of one of the last wagons. I went there, and shall not forget what I saw as long as I live; I wish that I had never seen it.

¹ See page 195 of the Appendix to the Bryce Report (Evidence).

² *The German Fury in Belgium*, p. 219. Hodder and Stoughton.

'Amongst some Frenchmen, three British soldiers, seriously wounded, were lying on some straw. They looked distressed, and I thought that their condition was critical. I was told that these men had not had any food for five days, and now there stood in front of the open wagon doors two to three hundred German soldiers, partly slightly wounded, who were well able to walk, partly German soldiers of the Landen garrison, who had been told off for distributing the soup. These two to three hundred men raged and jeered at those three unfortunate, heavily wounded British soldiers, who had not eaten for five days, and lay groaning helplessly on some dirty straw in a cattle-truck. The steaming tubs with hot soup were shown them, and these Germans shouted at them: "You want to eat, swine, swine; you ought to be killed! Beat them to death! Here, that's what you ought to get!"'

'As they spoke these last words they aimed their rifles at the unfortunate, bleeding, helpless, and hungry creatures. Others spat on their clothes and in their faces, and the enraged Germans foamed at the mouth.

'With weak eyes, eyes telling of approaching death, one of them gazed at these cruel torturers, or looked hungrily at the steaming soup; the two others had turned their heads on one side and closed their eyes. But at last also the third turned off his head and closed his eyes, sighing and groaning. In the meantime the Germans went on threatening them, blurting out all sorts of filthy abuse, *spitting* or threatening them with their rifles, while others were laughing and enjoying the helplessness of those three. . . . Silently I looked a little longer at the beastly scene, only sorry that I was not a giant who, with one strong hand, might restrain the roughs, and refresh with the other the burning, feverish lips of the wretched men.

'What distressed me most was that among those two to three hundred soldiers in front of that open cattle-truck was not one man who wanted to take the part of these unfortunate British; no, not one!

'When I reported the occurrence in *De Tijd*, I was fully conscious of the frightful accusation implied by my information; but I am prepared to confirm with the most sacred oaths that nothing in this accusation is untrue or exaggerated.'

This incident happened on October 9, 1914. On November 10, after taking a month to try and make out a case, the German Government issued an official denial, and tried to support it with 'evidence.' M. Mokveld at once demolished both the denial and the 'evidence,' and proved that he had not in any way exaggerated.

I think that most of us have read evidence of neutral and unbiassed witnesses of the brutality and indignities to which our wounded prisoners were subjected during their long journeys from battlefields to prison camps in Germany, so I will not repeat any of these accounts.

Subsequent treatment in the prison camps has varied a good deal with the locality. It has varied also according to the period of the war, and the number of German prisoners in our hands, especially officers; the German High Command is not much impressed by the fate of their 'cannon fodder' class, against whom reprisals would therefore have no effect. It has also varied very materially with the accessibility of the camps to neutral witnesses. I think that the Germans hope to regain some day the good-will of the trading communities of the world, and realise that some of these would prefer not to deal with murderers and torturers, however profitable such dealings might appear.

The German creed, in which the nation has been taught by bayonets and machine-guns of late years to believe, lays down that the State must in all circumstances be implicitly obeyed. That the eternal laws of right and wrong may, subject to that limit, be obeyed by the individual, but that they have no binding power upon the representatives of the State itself. When dealing with other States, no moral law whatever is binding. Undiluted violence, uncontrolled by honour, or by any moral obligation, must be ruthlessly applied. If, in time of peace, any other nation should resent or oppose this policy of violent aggression, then war must ensue as the logical 'continuation of policy.' This war has shown clearly that the agents of such a State soon assume, as individuals, the attributes of the State itself. For examples of national characteristics, as shown by conduct to prisoners and captives, we can obtain the most reliable information from incidents reported from areas not under the observation of neutral witnesses; for example, from the mines where prisoners are employed, and from the strip of territory immediately behind the German firing line.

We will take the last-mentioned, because a recent Government publication (Cd. 8988) enables us to picture to ourselves the lives of our brethren, our fellow-countrymen, and our fellow-citizens of the Oversea Dominions, while detained as prisoners behind the lines. This publication contains the report of Mr. Justice Younger's Commission to the Government of the United Kingdom. It is

one of the saddest documents on record. The Bryce Commission on Belgian atrocities contained the most appalling evidence applying to the two months immediately following the outbreak of war. Most people will not read it. They say 'Don't tell us!' and run away with their hands to their ears, like the people of the great land of Hearsay, in Charles Kingsley's 'Water Babies'; but no one in this country who has not read both the Bryce Commission report, the evidence laid before that Commission, and the recent Younger report on the treatment of British prisoners, has any right to open his mouth about our national war aims, or the justice of our cause.

Let us remind ourselves that, on January 24, 1917, the German Government affirmed that in the French and Belgian territories occupied by German troops no British prisoners of war had hitherto been detained for any considerable time, with the exception of the sick and wounded undergoing treatment in hospitals, and the prisoners employed in the hospital services. In making that statement the German Government deliberately lied. It has since been proved that large numbers of British prisoners had at that date been detained for months at work immediately behind the German lines in France and in Belgium. But we need not enlarge upon the German policy of prevarication. It is done deliberately, in accordance with the doctrine of the Great General Staff, who are all brought up on the theories of Clausewitz about war. Words, which he called 'very inexpensive,' he described further as 'chiefly the means with which the wily one takes in those he practises upon.' At the date mentioned the Germans were anxious to accuse us of similar practices, in order to lessen the effect when their own crimes were discovered. I will quote from the Younger report : ¹

'Furthermore, at the end of April 1917, an agreement was definitely concluded between the British and German Governments that prisoners of war should not on either side be employed within 30 kilometres of the firing line. Nevertheless the German command continued without intermission so to employ their British prisoners, under the inhuman conditions stated in this report. And that certainly until the end of 1917—it may be even until now—although it has never even been suggested by the German authorities, so far as the Committee are aware, that the 30 kilometres limit agreed upon has not been scrupulously observed by the British Command in the letter as well as in the spirit.'

¹ H.M. Stationery Office; Aldwych. Price 3d.

The report refers to inhuman conditions. The conditions were worse than inhuman, as the word is understood by us. The treatment accorded to British soldiers by the Germans, if applied to brute beasts in the service of man, would in this country be punished by imprisonment at the instigation of the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals. It included starvation, over-work, exposure thinly clad to the bitter cold of a winter in Flanders, the blows of rifle butts and stabs of bayonets, the moral torture of being forced to aid an enemy's army in the field, being shot in cold blood when unable to march on account of weakness and illness resulting from brutality, and being killed for trying to pick up scraps of food refuse to assuage the pangs of famine. Using the information given to us by Mr. Justice Younger's Commission, let us try to picture to ourselves the lives of these our fellow-countrymen who faced the prospect of death for our sakes, but have been reserved by the turn of fortune for a worse fate.

Here are descriptions of their clothing. 'Threadbare and in rags, without boots, wearing old rag slippers.' 'Ragged,' clothes drenched through, but still we had to sleep in them.' 'No change of any kind.' 'Verminous'—'filthy'—'odds and ends of French and German clothing, anything they could get hold of'—'tunic, trousers, thin shirt . . . an old hat, no coat and no underclothes.'

These were the conditions under which they 'rested' between their seven days of labour in every week: 'without any great coats or blankets'—'in wet clothes'—'we slept on the bare boards without blankets'—'accommodated 110 in a room 15 feet by 20 feet. No means of sanitation except a barrel standing in the corner of the room. It was so cold that the windows had to be closed at night, and of course . . .'

They were starved. This is meant literally; the following are typical descriptions of their diet: (1) 'Ration coffee and a slice of bread at 4.45 A.M., soup of barley and horse-flesh at 2 P.M. (8 lb. of barley and 10 lb. of horse flesh between 240 men)'; (2) 'about $\frac{1}{4}$ lb. of black bread with coffee in the morning, then soup at midday, and at 4.30 coffee again without sugar or milk.'

This was their treatment on their way to and from work, to which they had to march up to 10 kilometres (8 miles) each way: Killed for leaving the ranks to try and pick up scraps of food, such as potato peelings, nettles, or dandelions, to assuage their hunger. Beaten with a dog-whip if slow in getting to work owing to weakness. 'Knocked about if they did not march as fast as

the Germans wanted them to, although they were all so weak.' 'On a march of 11 kilometres a man fell out ill, the guard gave him so many minutes to fall in again, and told him he would shoot him if he was not up by then; he could not go on, and the guard shot him.'

Before we refer to the nature of the work to which they were put, on the diet and treatment described, let us compare German words with German deeds. These are two extracts from the German War Book:

'Prisoners of war are protected against unjustifiable severities, ill-treatment, and unworthy hardship. War captivity is, in other words, no longer an act of grace on the part of the victor, but a right of the defenceless.'

'Prisoners of war can be put to moderate work proportionate to their position in life . . . but these tasks should not be prejudicial to health nor in any way dishonourable or such as contribute directly or indirectly to the military operations against the fatherland of the captive.'

According to that 'scrap of paper,' the Hague Convention of 1907, to which the Germans subscribed, 'Prisoners of War must be humanely treated; all their personal belongings, except arms, horses, and military papers, remain their property; the State may employ the labour of prisoners of war, other than officers, according to their rank and capacity, but the work shall not be excessive, and shall have no connection with the operations of war.'

And these are the surroundings and nature of the work upon which these British soldiers are employed by their captors: Excessively hard, eight to nine hours a day (and this under such conditions and on such diet). Close behind the German lines and under shell-fire, by which they were constantly hit. On one occasion (May 1917) as many as seven were killed and four wounded by a British or French shell. 'Their normal work was making roads, repairing railways, constructing light railways, digging trenches, erecting wire entanglements, making gunpits, loading ammunition, filling ammunition wagons, carrying trench mortars, and doing general fatigue work, which, under pain of death, the N.C.O.s were compelled to supervise—work not only forbidden by the laws of war, but also exceedingly hard.'

It has been necessary to quote all these details, because, without them, it would be difficult to believe the descriptions which

follow of the effect produced upon the victims by ghastly cruelty. Let us remember our men as we see them when they leave us for the Front, or when they come home for their rare intervals of leave. Well clad, healthy, in the pink of condition, and above all clean in person. The British soldier has a positive passion for washing himself when he gets a chance :—‘ Weak and emaciated.’ Two instances of men who weighed 13 stone when captured. ‘ One was sent back from the firing line too weak to walk, weighing 8 stone only ; the other escaped to the British lines, weighing no more. Another man lost 2 stone in six weeks.—‘ Literally nearly dead with ill-treatment and starvation.’ A British General Staff Officer writes of one who escaped : ‘ I fetched him back from the lines and it almost made me cry. All that awful January and February out all day in the wet and cold ; no overcoat, and at night no blanket ; in a shelter where the clothes froze stiff on him ; no change of underclothes in three months, and he was a mass of vermin, no chance of washing. The bodies of all of them were covered with sores. “ Beaten and starved,” one of them said, “ sooner than go through it again, I’d just put my head under the railway ”.—‘ So weak as to be useless for work. In a shocking state, literally skin and bone, hardly able to walk, and quite worn out physically and mentally.—‘ Ravenous through being half-starved, and half savages ’—‘ half shaven, verminous, suffering from skin diseases, and half savage from hunger and ill-treatment.’ ‘ No more of these parties taken through the main street of the town but . . . by by-ways on account of the feeling that had been caused among the population. I am told that the population showed a great deal of sympathy, tears, &c.’—‘ Collapsed from overwork.’—‘ Too weak to walk.’—‘ Grey-headed from the five months’ treatment.’—‘ Dying every day through hardship and exposure.’—‘ Hungry, lousy, and worked out.’—‘ In a terrible condition, famished beyond words . . . worked to the bone . . . in a filthy condition. They made our camp lousy. . . . They were so famished that two died of eating the food we gave them.’—‘ Conditions so terrible that I cannot describe it. . . . They were terribly thin and weak, and fell down . . . they were in an absolutely exhausted state, and they were covered with vermin and had been like that for about twelve months’ (November 1917).—Again, ‘ all of them were in a shocking condition, absolutely starved, with boils and sores all over them’ (March 1917).—‘ They are worked until they either die or so completely collapse that they are

useless' . . . 'it was nothing to wake up in the morning and find the man sleeping beside you dead.' I cannot go on. Further details are to be found in the Report of the Younger Commission, to which I have referred.

To add to the mental misery of many of the British prisoners behind the German lines, they have been cut off from their homes for many months, sometimes altogether, until they succumbed to the 'right of the defenceless,' as interpreted by the Hun. As the report puts it :

'added to all these hardships, it was the total absence of parcels, and the fact that letters or communications from friends rarely reached them, that placed these prisoners, for misery, in a class apart. . . . Instances are on record where the very existence of some of them was undisclosed by their captors for many months. In the month of March 1917, for example, a body of these prisoners who had been captured as long before as *August* 1916, and had been kept at work by the Germans behind their lines ever since, were returned to a parent camp in Germany weak and emaciated. On arriving there they found a number of their own names in the lists of missing men that had been sent from our War Office through Switzerland and posted in the camp.'

The report goes on to explain that they were apparently allowed to write postcards and, in some cases, letters, but it would seem that in the majority of instances these postcards and letters, for some reason unexplained, never reached their destination, and to all intents and purposes their writers remained dead to the world.

There is no object in writing more about their sufferings. Their emaciated bodies survive. The Germans have also tried to kill their souls. In the *Times* of May 29 last were published disclosures made by the very level-headed correspondent of that paper at Amsterdam. A British prisoner of war told him about the methods adopted to lure him into working in an ammunition factory—first starvation in solitary confinement, then the temptation of food, of women, and of bodily comforts, when at the end of his physical endurance.

I can write no more. The first thought that will occur to all who read the reports to which I have referred will be, 'How can we help?' We have found out the whereabouts, as far as we could, of all British subjects who are known to be prisoners of war in Germany. We have no guarantee that they are all at the addresses given, because they are sent to and fro from the parent camps to

the hell behind the lines. We have 'adopted' them. We have sent parcels to them. These parcels save them from starvation in the parent camps, but as late as November 1917, 'there were at Limburg-am-Lahn undelivered between 18,000 and 20,000 parcels for British prisoners on the Western Front.' How many lie elsewhere undelivered we do not know. 'The matter is of tragic importance to the prisoners concerned; every consideration of humanity demands that it should be so regarded. It made and makes just the difference between starvation and existence to the unfortunate sufferers . . . it is impossible in terms of exaggeration to describe the sufferings these prisoners have undergone.'

The idea of reprisals will occur. In such matters threats seem to be unavailing. A British officer-prisoner, in the September number of the 'Journal of the Royal United Service Institution,' quotes an example from French methods which proved effective.

I began this article with a few remembrances of the religious beliefs of childhood. Hell was explained to many of us as a place maintained by a malignant Being to 'punish' the 'wicked.' Excepting in infancy, I do not think that this theory has retained much influence over many people. On the other hand, we have the more appealing theory of 'cleansing fire.' Eternal fire to some is a simile, drawn from the material world, of the painful process which burns out evil, such as that deliberately cultivated in the soul of the German people by their present rulers, the Great General Staff, in order to use them as the agents of their policy. Belief in the existence of a hell, so defined, will provide some comfort for those who despair of the future of the universe, and the endurance of moral principles on this earth. The Spanish Inquisitors are credited by historians with cruelty almost beyond belief. In their pitiful ignorance, it may be that many of them thought that by such methods they would advance the progress of a religion based upon love. The Germans, according to their present Chancellor, and other official exponents of their policy, have resorted to similar cruelty for the sake of 'economic development.'

We profess to believe that no suffering and self-sacrifice in a good cause is thrown away, but it is difficult to conceive how the martyrdom of our soldiers behind the lines can be looked upon from such an aspect. There is only a glimmer of light through the clouds at present. It is inconceivable that the German nation as a whole can know of the prolonged torture of prisoners which has for ever stained the honour of the German army, hitherto regarded

as sacred by the majority of the population. The Government (the Great General Staff) is responsible. We constantly hear that it is for the Germans to decide upon their own form of Government. So it may be, but every far-seeing German must realise that the conduct of German armies outside their own country is a question affecting other nations, and this conduct is attributed by them to the form of Government in Germany. The horrors we have described are perpetrated in the name of economic development. Perhaps before long the German rulers may grasp the fact that such development will be impossible amongst the world's producers and consumers, whose compatriots have been submitted to brutality unsurpassed in the annals of warfare. It may be that the interests of German industrialists will bring about the change in policy that moral obligations have failed to achieve. Meanwhile the British prisoners behind the lines seem to be beyond human aid, until we have completed the defeat of the German armed forces, which stand between us and our fellow-countrymen. Accounts published in the *Times* of September 9 show, I am afraid, that the pitiful horrors are still going on. Reports from one Prisoners' camp state that some of our men from behind the German lines arrived there in a dying condition as late as August 24. Details, as yet uncorroborated, of their state and treatment are almost worse than those given in the Younger report.

Whether our work lies in the firing line, at sea, or amongst the comforts of a home saved by the British Navy from immediate contact with the horrors of war, the martyrdom of our fellow-countrymen behind the lines will inspire us to put forth our very utmost efforts on their behalf. In our determination to deliver them I think that many of us will find a new meaning in the reference in the Litany to Prisoners and Captives, with whose danger, necessity, and grievous tribulation we have now been made acquainted.

THE "HYENAS OF PIRRA.

BY RICHARD BAGOT.

FROM time immemorial, and in all countries, a belief has existed and exists among certain sections of humanity the most closely in touch with the elements of Nature in the power of individual human beings to change themselves at will into some lower form of animal creation. The annals of witchcraft in these islands abound with instances of such a belief; and no one acquainted with the folk-lore of some of our more remote provincial districts, even in England itself, would venture to assert that it had wholly disappeared into the limbo of dead superstitions. In some cases the man or woman supposed to be endowed with the power in question assumes, or is projected into, the actual bodily form of the wild animal; while in others, such as the *lupomanaro* in Italy, in France, and in Eastern Europe generally, the individual although unable to transform or escape from his or her human body, nevertheless assumes the habits, instincts, and characteristics of the wolf. To those among the readers of these pages who may pride themselves on being altogether superior to such idle superstitions, or who may regard such phenomena as the *lupomanaro*, or wolf-possession, as either purely imaginary, or, at the best, impostures, I may say that some years ago I made a careful investigation into the subject of lycanthropy in Italy, and that, by the kindness of an eminent Italian physician who had personal experience of cases of this strange form of mental obsession, I was enabled to describe it accurately, as I believe, in the pages of a novel of mine entitled 'A Roman Mystery.'

It is, indeed, owing to the fact of my having written that book that a friend of mine, who has for some years held an important Government appointment in Northern Nigeria, recently sent me the following communications regarding the alleged powers of individuals belonging to certain native races in his vast district to change themselves into hyenas. He is good enough to say that he thinks these statements, the result of a series of experiments and investigations made by an officer in a well-known infantry regiment, at that time commanding a detachment of native troops in Northern Nigeria, might be of use to me; and if, as I believe, they may be interesting to others besides myself, I feel sure that I shall be well

advised to present them exactly as they were written by Lieutenant F—, the officer in question, without attempting to alter his phraseology, which undoubtedly carries with it evidence of good faith and temperate judgment. I may add that, since I have not the definite permission of my friend to publish the name of the officer who sent him the following statements, I naturally refrain from doing so, and neither do I mention the name of the regiment to which he belongs. I have, however, communicated them to the editor of this magazine for his personal information.

THE HYENAS OF PIRRA.

For the past ten months I have been quartered alone in a Pagan district, four days from the nearest white settlement. Quite alone, except for the detachment of soldiers under my command. I have had time to study the habits of the inhabitants of the district.

It is a well-known story that nearly all these West African Pagan tribes are said to possess the power of changing into various animals at night—some into alligators, others into leopards and hyenas; others, again, into elephants. Of course to the educated mind these things appear at first to be absolutely impossible; but there is evidence, and good evidence too, that there may be something in this unusual power. During my stay in this particular district I have on three separate occasions, and entirely different occasions, had this power of changing brought forcibly to my notice, and I intend to set down accurately my experiences, from notes made immediately after such experiences. People will find what follows hard to believe; but all is fact, and not the fancy of a distorted and lonely brain.

To understand the situation clearly, you must know that in this particular part of the Empire one lives in grass and mud houses, so solid protection against thieves and outside dangers is hard to devise. My house was a large mud-walled building with a grass roof. Doors did not exist. Behind the house was a compound with 'boys' and pony houses. At the time I am writing of, July 1915, I had, amongst other occupants of my compound, two milch goats and two sheep. I had often heard hyenas close round at nights, but had never been worried by them till now. About the middle of July one goat was taken. The other goat died the next night from, I believe, a snake bite. The carcass I had pulled out into the bush, and set a large gin with eight-inch jaws at the door of a zareba of

thorns I had built round the goat. That night one of the sheep was taken. The trap was sprung, and round the trap over the goat and where the sheep had been were the unmistakable tracks of a hyena. The last remaining sheep I put into one of the 'boys' houses, saw the grass mat was closed and securely tied, and hoped for the best.

The next night I was roused about 1 A.M. by rustling grass. I crept out silently with my gun, but nothing was to be seen or heard. I walked round the compound, but found nothing unusual, so thinking that all was well I went to bed. I was just dozing off when the 'boy' whose house I had put the sheep into came and woke me up. He was very frightened, and it was some time before I could make him speak. At last he spluttered out that a hyena had come into the house and killed the sheep. I at once went out, but heard and saw nothing. But on entering the house a horrible sight presented itself. The poor sheep was standing up, but the whole of its head was gone. The lower jaw only was whole, and stuck out in a horrible manner. The wound was so clearly cut that it looked as if it had been done with a knife. I carefully examined the house, but found no marks of a struggle inside, but outside, at a join of the grass mat, there were the well-marked traces of a hyena.

Next night I tied up a goat which I had bought for the purpose and waited over it, sitting in a chair quite close; but in the shadow. About twelve o'clock I heard a noise in my cook-house, but nothing more happened until about 1 A.M., when I saw a moving object coming swiftly towards the goat. It was a hyena! It came with a rush, and stopped suddenly within two feet of the goat, spurning the gravel and sand up almost into my face. I raised my rifle and fired. The brute fell head over heels, but rose at once and made off. I let drive my second barrel, but failed to stop him. My orderly, who was close by, immediately came out with a lamp, and we examined the ground. Blood there was in plenty, but it was too dark to follow the trail, so there was nothing left but to wait till dawn. After my two shots were fired all was quiet for about twenty-five minutes, when drums began to beat in the Pagan town, and the death-call rang through the air.

As soon as it was light I went out on the trail, easily followed by the blood alone. In the first two hundred yards it led us straight towards the Pagan town, but then turned sharply towards the water. Here the animal had evidently drunk, and had then passed up the stream and lain down on a patch of white sandy

gravel thrown up by ants. Up to this point the footprints were unmistakably those of a hyena. On this patch the brute had lain down, as a large pool of blood indicated, and also a bit of bone and torn flesh testified to the severity of the wound. From this point all trace of hyena was lost; but immediately leading off the gravel patch on to a bush path was the clear imprint of a naked human foot.¹

Rain had fallen during the night, so tracking was easy, and we were able to track these human footprints right up to the Pagan town, losing them only when just inside it. I had the whole bush searched for a mile round but no trace of hyena could be found. At about noon that day news was brought to me that an influential man in the Pagan town had died very early that morning. They could not account for his death, but said that he had a large hole in his body, caused they knew not how. I tried to see the body, but was not allowed to do so; I also sent a man from the Hausa settlement near by to try and get a view of it, but he was told to go away.

About the beginning of October, 1915, a donkey died in the Hausa town. I had it pulled into the bush, well away from the high road and near a tree suitable to sit up in. For two nights I sat up, but got no shot. Several small jackals came to feed upon the carcass, but hyenas kept well away. The third night I was too tired to sit up, and also the proximity of the body was none too savoury; so I set a gun-trap, using a .308 carbine for the purpose. I then left orders with the guard that as soon as a shot was heard I was to be called. About twelve o'clock I was awakened by a soldier who told me the gun had just gone off. I hurried out of my house just in time to hear the drumming start, and the death-wail break forth in the nearest Pagan village. As soon as it was light I went again to the spot, and found a blood trail and hyena tracks leading straight away from the mouth of the carbine towards the native village. These tracks I followed until within three hundred yards of the nearest house, when all blood and hyena tracks vanished abruptly, and only human footprints could be seen. I inquired at the village if anyone had died during the

¹ In Somali-land, and in other parts of East Africa, a wide-spread belief exists that it is perilous to sleep on ground thrown up by ants. The sleeper runs the risk of being 'possessed' by evil spirits which may change him into some wild animal. When once this metamorphosis has taken place, it infallibly recurs, and the victim is never freed from the evil obsession.—(R. B.)

night, and was told that the Pagan chief's mother had died mysteriously, and that none knew what she had died of, as she was perfectly well the evening before. I kept my gun-trap set for three consecutive nights following, but nothing disturbed the gun or the remains of the donkey, the latter being eventually picked clean by vultures.

A boy who had entered the Pagan village just before I got to my gun-trap on the morning after the one and only shot, reported that he had seen Pagans hastily clearing the road from their houses out towards the main road. On showing me the path on which they had been working, I found that it was the same as that along which I had followed the blood trail and the hyena tracks. The men had evidently stopped clearing it when they saw me coming up, and this would account for the abrupt cessation of the trail and footprints. For a month after this I did nothing to try to solve the question as to whether my nocturnal visitors were men, or beasts, or both; but at the beginning of November a horse died in the Hausa settlement. I had the body dragged out about four hundred yards from the houses, built a zareba of thorns round it, and leaving one opening, set my gun to command it. The first night nothing happened, but the second was more successful. About 11.30 P.M. I was awakened by a shot, and went out to listen. For fully half an hour nothing more was to be heard, when suddenly the drumming started, and the cries of mourning for one just dead. At daylight I went out to see what had happened to the gun. I found it, of course, discharged, and although I had been most careful to leave the grass in the doorway to the zareba in front of the gun undisturbed, it was now rolled down quite flat—the trigger of the gun was broken, but there was no blood near it.

About ten yards from the opening, however, was another patch of grass quite flattened down, with a large pool of blood about the middle of it. The blood was still liquid, and the grass all round was splattered with it. From this point onwards tracking was easy, for the blood had flowed freely, and in a distance of a hundred yards the brute had lain down three times, each time losing a quantity of blood. I tracked on for three hundred yards, until we reached a bush path leading to the Pagan town, but here, on the now familiar patch of sandy gravel, all traces of hyena tracks ceased, and there were only human footprints. The path was well used, and already some dozen Pagans had used it that morning on their way to work. That night I again set my trap, but nothing happened. The next, however, was

practically a reproduction of the night before. About 1 A.M. I was awakened by my 'boy,' who said the gun had just gone off. I went out, and knew by this time what to expect. Sure enough, in about twenty minutes the drumming and wailing started again, but this time in a different Pagan village. At daylight I went to the trap. This time the gun was sprung from the inside. The hyena had evidently entered through a weak place in the zareba, and had tried to go out through the proper doorway. Here blood started from the very first, for the shot had apparently taken him far back, and had temporarily paralysed his hind-quarters, as was shown by the tracks. The parallel lines showed where he had dragged his legs through the grass, like a rabbit shot in the back going along on his front legs. We followed the tracks until close to the Pagan town, with the usual results. On each of the two occasions over the body of this horse a man was reported to have died mysteriously, although each was in the prime of youth. There was nothing whatever to account for their deaths, but the Pagans would on no account allow their bodies to be seen. After the second occasion nothing more visited the body of the horse, and the vultures cleared all of it except the bones.

These experiences, of course, prove nothing; but they certainly give food for much thought. I have set down just what happened, from notes made at the time. The chief of the Hausa settlement told me an experience of his own which perhaps is worth setting down, but I cannot say whether it is true or not. At all events he told it me himself, and declared it to be true, so I think it should be recorded.

He was much worried by hyenas, and so tied up a goat, he and one other sitting up over it with poisoned arrows. For some hours nothing happened, but eventually hyenas approached, and came up so close that he and his companion were able to shoot their arrows. Soon after doing so they heard drumming in the two nearest Pagan villages. The next day they searched for their arrows, but were unable to find them. Near midday some Pagans came to the Hausa town and accused the Hausa Chief of killing three of their people with poisoned arrows, and told him that only bad men went out at nights with arrows, and that if he was good he had better stay in his house after dark. This Chief firmly believed in the truth of the story he told me, and his man who sat up with him and also shot at the hyenas corroborated to me every word of it. I may mention that many white men have tried

their best actually to kill a hyena at Pirra, but no one has yet been successful. The Pagans themselves regard them as their friends, and would never attempt to kill them, I suppose because they think that they might kill father or brother, or mother by mistake! All the Pagans of the Pirra country declare that certain of them possess the power of changing into animals at night, though none declares that he personally possesses this power. They are all agreed, too, on one point, namely, that the act of transformation into the animal form takes place always on a patch of gravel or sand thrown up by the small black ants.

A word about this particular tribe of Pagans may not be out of place. Officially they are called the Yunguru. They are a low class of Pagan with few wants, and practically no clothing. They inhabit an area of some 120 square miles, and live chiefly on 'gerr'—a native beer brewed from Guinea corn and made so thick that it is food and drink in one. In old days they were a prey to slave-dealers, so took to the hills. The Fulani tribe tried hard to capture or destroy them, but the hills defeated their efforts. They have been under our control only some four years, but now pay a tax, though unwillingly. They breed fast, and appear to flourish under the protection of our Government. Their customs and laws would fill a volume.

The above statements by Lieutenant F—— furnish, as he himself observes, no proofs of the power of metamorphosis claimed by this West African tribe. At the same time it must be admitted that even if the episodes he describes be merely coincidents they are at least very singular coincidences, and ones not to be dismissed lightly. In connexion with them I will now quote the testimony of another British officer, the late Captain H. H. Shott, D.S.O., who was killed at the battle of Mons. Captain Shott was an intimate friend of the official in Northern Nigeria who has been kind enough to send me these results of investigations into phenomena which can scarcely be regarded by thoughtful and unprejudiced persons as mere superstitions born of ignorance and savagery, whatever may be the eventual explanation of them which a more extended knowledge of the psychic forces—a knowledge as yet in its infancy so far as our Western civilisation is concerned—may discover. He was at Nafada, in the Bauchi Province in Nigeria, during 1906 and 1907, in charge of a detachment of troops. He and his soldiers occupied native built mud-houses surrounded by a low wall about a mile and

a half distant from the native town. For a considerable period they were raided nearly every night by hyenas led by one enormous brute which could always be distinguished by his tracks, and by degrees they lost all their live stock, such as sheep and goats. Captain Shott sat up for many consecutive nights trying to shoot the big hyena, but was never successful. He then made a small thorn zareba, tied up a goat in it, and fixed a gun facing the entrance. Each night, however, the hyena took the goat without setting off the gun, by breaking through the thorn fence instead of coming in through the opening. At last Captain Shott, noticing a weak place in the fence, set the gun to face it, but still left the wire attached to the trigger at the usual entrance. That night the gun was heard to go off, and the report was instantly followed by the howl of a hyena. Accompanied by another European who had arrived that day, Captain Shott went out with hurricane lamps and found that the hyena had tried to force its way through the fence, and a large pool of blood showed that he had been hard hit. The tracks were those of the big leader of the pack. This was in July. The ground was very soft from rain, and the guinea-corn in the fields between the troops' quarters and the native town was already head-high. Captain Shott and Mr. Hastings, the other European, could hear the hyena moaning in the guinea-corn not far off, and followed up the blood and tracks. At one point they could hear the hyena apparently threshing about on the ground as though in great pain, and when they came up they found the jaw of the beast lying near a large pool of blood. The animal, however, had struggled onward, and a little later they came to a path leading to the native town where all tracks and traces of blood abruptly stopped. After searching the bush around for some time they returned to their quarters. The next morning a deputation of natives came from Nafada to see Captain Shott. After the usual formalities, he asked them why they had come to him. They replied that the Galadina of Nafada was dead, and that the Captain had shot him. The 'Galadina' is one of the principal personages of a Hausa town, usually the third in seniority. Captain Shott told them not to talk nonsense, and declared that he had not shot anyone. 'But you did shoot the Galadina,' was the reply; 'only do not think that we mind. In reality we are rather glad, for we all know what the Galadina was.'—'But why do you say that I shot him?' insisted the officer.

'Well,' they said to him, 'last night some of us saw the Galadina going out of the town after sunset, and one of us asked

him where he was going. The Galadina said, "I am going into the bush." Now he always used to go into the bush about that time. Two hours later we heard your gun go off, and some time afterwards we saw the Galadina come back. His head was all muffled up, and he walked like a very sick man. When he got to his compound he drove out all his women, and this morning when we went to see him and to find out what was the matter he was lying dead, and his jaw was shot away.'

Captain Shott subsequently learned that the Galadina was considered to be a noted 'hyena man,' having the power to change himself into a particularly large and cunning specimen of the animal. He told his friend (my informant) that the above experience had converted him from being a very sceptical soldier into rather more than a half-believer in the strange power claimed by certain of the natives in those districts. It might, of course, easily be argued that the Galadina of Nefada had been shot by his own townsmen. But against this argument the fact must be noted that in the northern provinces of Nigeria no guns are sold, and none are allowed to be used by any natives except those in immediate attendance upon an Emir. No inhabitant of the town of Nafada either possessed or could use any such weapon.

THE LAST OF THE GRENVILLES.

By BENNET COPPLESTONE.

VI. HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF.

THE *Ark Royal* steaming south at easy cruising speed did not reach the Falkland Islands until the end of October. Cradock, with his weak and unhandy squadron, had sailed away into the Pacific, and was even then about to run his head into the hornets' nest of von Spee's concentrated force. But about what was happening on the far side of the South American Spur the *Ark Royals* knew nothing and could know nothing. They found Port Stanley empty of ships but full of coal. Though the *Ark Royal* was lucky in the amplitude of her bunkers—she had been built to steam across the Atlantic at a full and wasteful speed—Dickie had already learned that there are only two kinds of days at sea: those upon which one coals and those upon which one doesn't. He had also learned that a buccaneering cruiser, no less than a battleship, is tethered to her coaling stations and colliers as by unyielding lines of steel wire. One goes out to fight, yet fights rarely; one does not go out to coal, yet finds oneself rated involuntarily as a perpetual coalheaver. Dickie did his trick of coal shovelling with the rest—the vast bunkers of the *Ark Royal* were most damnable insatiable—but Willie Pinchin, assistant paymaster and captain's secretary, was always deeply involved in official duties whenever the coal bags came aboard. Manual labour had no place in Master Willie's scheme of life. The padre—for they piously carried a chaplain—might blacken his skin to match his black heart (I am quoting Willie), yet the captain's secretary remained unmoved by the sacerdotal example. 'I am,' declared he, 'the one man in the ship who does any work. The Skipper depends upon me every minute of the day and consults me upon everything. I should very much like to help you Johnnies with those beastly bags, but I cannot desert the Skipper. If I did he would most properly have me court-martialled and shot. You see, I am his confidential, his very confidential, secretary.'

'We know that already, you measly slacker,' growled the Commander, a rough son of the Merchant Service to whom coaling

in bags from tossing colliers was as loathsome a pursuit as to Willie—he had been brought up upon big shoots and open hatches. 'We never get much chance to forget that you keep the Skipper under your thumb. Still, that is no reason why you shouldn't bear a hand with the bags.'

'Nothing would please me more,' blandly returned Willie. 'Nothing. But you see how I am placed. Even at this minute I am wasting good time talking to you. I ought to be balancing the accounts. If I don't,' he darkly added, 'pay day will come round and no pay for any man Jack of you.' As the keeper of the cash and the records, the ingenious Willie kept his thumb as firmly pressed upon the ship's company as upon poor Grenville, his chief.

The *Ark Royal* was at Port Stanley when, on November 8, the sorely wounded *Glasgow* trailed in, sheltering under lee of the fat bulk of the *Canopus*. The lean fast cruiser, the one fighting survivor of Coronel, looked like a crippled terrier under convoy of a sheep. It was no fault of the officers and men of the *Canopus* that she was without use in pursuit, in fighting, or in flight. It was the fault of those who sent an old slow ship to do a fast ship's work.

'I have just dined in the wardroom of the *Glasgow*,' wrote Dickie in the log intended for my private eye, 'and her Skipper was so kind as to speak to me about my ship. The officers are wonderful. They have had an awful thrashing and ought to be all at the bottom of the Pacific. At least six hundred shells were fired at them, yet they were hit five times altogether and only once at all seriously. No one would guess from their gay talk that they are hot from a howling disaster. They are all as bright as paint and as cheerful as Dad used to be. I suppose that it is in the blood of them to take the rough with the smooth—or in the training. I should have it in the blood all right though I seem to be a bit of a grouser. My training must have been faulty. All they ask is to be given some consorts with legs and guns and to be turned on to von Spee again. One thing worries me; I daren't refer to it to them, and there is no one here to ask. Were they right to make a bolt after the other two ships had been sunk, or as good as sunk? Ought they not to have stayed and been wiped out themselves? Common sense says, of course, that they were right, and I suppose that Duty to the Service would say that same thing. Why should a king's ship be wasted? And yet it must have needed much more courage in the *Glasgow's* Skipper to bolt than to have stayed and

to have been uselessly destroyed. If I had been an officer in his ship I should now be jolly grateful to him. The long range fighting business when one is out-gunned and out-ranged makes me cold in the stomach to think of. As a rampagious Grenville I am a bit of a fraud; to you, my placidly tolerant Uncle Bennet, I will freely confess that I am no better than a coward. Though very few long range shells seem to hit, yet to stand on decks of a frail haystack of a converted liner like the *Ark Royal* and to watch them plumping into the sea all around must be a devilish squirmy experience. The smallest of them would burst us up if it got well home between decks.

'Little as I enjoy the prospect it looks as if we were in for heavy dose of shell medicine. For it is whispered in the wardroom that we are to cruise away north by our little selves and to put up a tall bluff with the whole German squadron. The *Canopus* stays here to protect Port Stanley and the coal reserves for the mighty ships which are coming, while the *Glasgow* is off for Rio, there to be repaired of her hurts. The big fast squadron of avengers which is already at sea cannot arrive for another month. In the meantime von Spee might descend upon the Falklands and play old Harry with our only base, in spite of the *Canopus's* twelve-inch guns. She hasn't the speed of a healthy tortoise, and would have to stay in port while the Germans were ravaging the Islands.

'The *Ark Royal* is to be ordered away to play a lone hand on the Chilian coast. We are to form a coaling base somewhere and somehow, to get into touch with von Spee somehow and somewhere, to delay him all we can by pretending to be the advance scout of a strong English squadron, to listen to his messages and to discover his plans, to sink his colliers and to run from his fighting ships. I am all for legging it at our full twenty-two knots if we ever see a German top the horizon, but I have my doubts of Dad. That confounded Willie has been at his sorcery tricks again and has prophesied that the *Ark Royal* will come by her end in a blaze of glory. That's not a hard thing to prophesy when one carries a Skipper like Dad, who would be only too jolly well pleased to make it good. But since Coronel I have been right off glory. Glory is no sort of wear for my cold corpse. There is nothing of the armour-plated hero about me.'

'It is all right,' wrote Dickie a couple of days later. 'The story of our rôle was correct in most of the details. We are already at sea chock a block with good Welsh coal. You couldn't get

another lump on board unless you put it in the funnels or under the cabin bunks. Coal is going to be our biggest trouble. We shall have to nose in and out of the West Coast ports, seeking where we can lay in soft Chilian stuff to eke out our hard Welsh. The Skipper called all us officers into his saloon yesterday and read his Orders. They are mighty vague. The *Ark Royal* is a bally Forlorn Hope, whose job it is to sacrifice herself to make good the work of the relieving squadron. Dad admitted as much when he told us that we must at all costs stop von Spee from coming South until the Falkland Islands were ready to receive him hospitably. "Never," said he, "has a king's ship been granted a more noble privilege than ours. We are fast, we are well armed"—Dad is a glorious old humbug, isn't he?—"we understand exactly what is required of us, and we will do our duty at any cost." Of course we all cheered the old man. I'm sure that if anyone could inspire a mixed ship's company, officers and men who have never seen a shot fired at them, with splendid unselfish courage, Dad is the man. Even I felt quite heroic after his speech, and I know, better than my messmates, what small reliance can be placed upon our ancient guns. Our Commander said that the Skipper could depend upon us to the death, and upon every man and boy in the ship. Which is true enough. We are a scratch lot, but we shall go through with the business however cold we may feel in our inmost stomachs. I wonder if any amateur fighting man was ever quite so candid as I am to you.

'Willie makes a most aggravating mystery of his confidential relations with our Skipper. He wags his head and looks like a fat grinning owl as we ignorant others discuss at limitless lengths the purpose and probably ending of our desperate cruise. "I could and I would a tale unfold" is written all over the blighter whom I could kick the more heartily because he was the friend of my boyhood. Through no seeking of his the little Jacob has robbed me of my birth-right. Now and then he graciously permits scraps of information to dribble out. One of them is the startling news that Dad and our enemy von Spee are intimate old friends. They were lieutenants together years ago on the China Station, the one English and the other German, yet friends of the firmest. I recollect now that Dad did mention to me during that long ago luncheon at the Naval and Military Club that he knew the C-in-C. of the German Pacific Squadron. No one expected then that the adroit creature would concentrate off the Chilian coast a squadron drawn from half the

seas of the world. There is a freemasonry about the regular Naval Services which makes no reckoning of national frontiers. The seas are all one, and the Services are all one. An N.O. is an N.O. all the world over, a man set apart and dedicated to the sea. I am sure that Dad and von Spee will fight one another the more joyfully because they are friends; they will sink or be sunk in hearty love and good fellowship. Sailors are a queer breed. Their old-world notions bubble up sometimes in my own land-corrupted blood. I feel a curious satisfaction myself that if we are all to be put down it will be by the friendly hand of a white man and a gentleman. Dad, according to Willie, says that there is nothing of the Prussian Junker about von Spee. He is a fine sailor and a real sportsman, and I am very glad for my dear old Dad's sake that his lone heroic hand is to be played against a knightly enemy. News has come through of the doings of the Germans in Belgium, and to my friends of the wardroom every man of German blood is a Bosche and a bloody Hun. But not to me, and not to Dad, I'm sure.'

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'Bennet, old man, I have great news for you, which I must set down at once in my log, though I am afraid that you will never see it. You will have realised in your understanding way how bitterly I have been disappointed, how my forced isolation from the one man whom I love above all others in the world has made of me the wretchedest of silly grouzers. That is all over now. My head is in the clouds and my feet dance upon the steel decks. For when we go into action and the great fight is joined somewhere beyond the northern horizon, Dad and I will be together. We shall be within six feet of one another, he at his duties and I at mine; together we shall face whatever Willie's pixies have planned for us. Isn't it splendid? Just when I had given up hope, when I felt like an unfriended melancholy dog about to be chucked into the Ditch with a stone tied to its neck, there came this turn in my wheel of Fortune. It happened so naturally and inevitably that I should have seen it coming if I had had as much brain as a decently intelligent rabbit.

'You will remember that up to now we have been working the guns as independent units. I have had the bow six-inch, old John the stern six-inch, and a Lieutenant R.N.R. on the boat deck the side batteries of four-inch. One can't fight an action that fool way, and Dad saw it all along as clearly as I did. So this afternoon he sent for me and the engineer who looks after the electrical fittings.

We call this engineer "Torps," though there isn't a blamed torpedo in the ship. "How long," asked Dad bluntly, "will it take you two to fix up a Gunnery Control on the upper bridge, my Action Station?" He explained that he must have the two six-inch guns under one Control near his own person, and be able also to keep in touch with the four-inch batteries through a subsidiary Control. "We can't fight an action," said Dad, "with every gunner doing what he darned pleases." I replied that we could soon shift the six-foot range-finder and the Dumeresque to the upper bridge—the range finder is unarmoured—and run navyphone connexions to the guns. We were not equipped with modern gunnery indicators. There would, I said, have to be a subsidiary Control on the boat deck in direct communication with the central Control; as the ranges were checked and the rate of change observed on the bridge we could pass on the information by 'phone. "Quite so," agreed Dad. "Now, what I want to know is: how long will the fixing and wiring take you? We shan't be in touch with the enemy for a week, but I want to get this Control completed and ready to operate within twenty-four hours. We must practise with the thing before we have to fight with it." Then up spake Torps: "If Sub-Lieutenant Grenville will explain exactly what wiring he wants done I will have it completed by to-morrow afternoon." "Make it so," said Dad. We were retiring from his cabin when Dad called to me to stop for a moment. And for the first time since we had come aboard the *Ark Royal* he spoke to me as "Dick." We had been "Sir" and "Grenville" to one another all through those weary weeks. When we were alone he turned to me smiling and held out his hand. "It has been good for you, Dickie," he said, "and good for me, though both of us have suffered. Did you think that I was going to stick it out to the end?" "Yes, Dad," said I. "You are the Captain and I have understood." He put his arm over my shoulder in the old way and hugged me, and we didn't speak for quite a minute. Then he muttered: "For once, inclination has marched with duty. We really did need a Gunnery Control on the upper bridge." "Of course we did, Sir," replied I, laughing happily; "even John would allow that the *Ark Royal* could not be fought without one." Then he dismissed me, and I pranced off to fit up that Control in double quick time. Come weal or woe the two Richards are themselves again.

'Dad does not do things by halves. He has taken me to his bosom once again, and with me the whole ship's company. He grows

younger every day as we forge towards our unknown destiny in the hot Pacific spaces. Perhaps his blood warms, as mine does, with the dazzling realisation that he and I are at last together in the fabulous South Seas of our ancestors. We seem to have put back the long calendar, for the frail bark of the Grenvilles is once more roving hostile seas to singe the beard of a formidable adversary. We haven't a friend that we know of north of the Straits, nowhere to refit if we happen to be injured, no base at which to replenish with coal and supplies. We are on our own, self-contained, and devilish happy. Dad has shed the regular Navy and the haughty Owner business. He wanders into the wardroom almost every night now and yarns to us freely of his plans. All the officers love him for his frankness and would do anything to please him. Willie has become a back number. His little day of swagger as the Captain's confidant has drawn to a close. Now that the Great Man takes counsel openly with his Commander and Navigating Lieutenant and Chief Engineer and Gunnery Lieutenant, the A.P. has become mighty small potatoes. Why, the fellow is not even an Executive Officer—little more, in fact, than a clerk. Dad's talks with us show him up in quite a new light even in my eyes. He was always the dearest and the loyalest and the bravest of men, but I never knew till now what a cunning old serpent of a parent I had. He has thought out the neatest and simplest of schemes for spoofing and bewildering his ancient pal, von Spee. He says that von Spee is a splendid sailor when he is given full time to work out plans in detail—his concentration at Easter Island, whither he gathered in cruisers from over half the world unknown to our Admiralty, was a naval masterpiece—but that his mind works slowly. He is not quick at the uptake. Give him a new problem in sea strategy every twenty-four hours, and he will be so flummoxed that he won't know which end of his ship travels first. So Dad has in mind to give von Spee a choice assortment of problems, and to keep him busy trying to find out whether he has to deal with a single ship or with a whole bally squadron. It really begins to look as if with decent luck—and we shall need all we can get—we may contrive to keep von Spee frolicking about on the wrong side of Cape Horn until our own battle crushers have reached the Falkland Islands, and then run off ourselves in time to be in at the grand finish.

'I have done Dad every kind of injustice. I had pictured him to myself and to you as a bull-headed fighter who would just run

in upon the German squadron and get himself and us sunk out of hand. I was all wrong. He is a master of finesse. If he is forced to fight he will, but he means to do his work without firing a shot if he can. "This is a job for brains, not guns," he has said to us; "for your brains and mine. Our tools will be speed, long coal endurance, and wireless telegraphy. We mustn't be seen if we can possibly keep out of sight, for the moment we are seen our pretty game of spoof will be ended. Von Spee is strong enough in ships and in guns to wipe us off the seas in ten minutes. We shall succeed for just so long as we can keep him wondering what he is up against." Dad smacked down his hand on the chart which was spread out on the table while he lectured us. "Look," said he. "We have to keep him from sailing to the Falklands for another fortnight"—this was on November 14. "After that, the sooner he butts his head into the trap, the better. For two weeks we must keep the sea and operate on his flank. He can't get any cable news, for we hold all the lines. He will grasp that some English devilry is being played against him, but he won't know what it is. That is the point. Until he finds out he dare not sail for the south and attack our Falklands base.'

'We have begun well. Willie, whose ugly nose is badly out of joint and his temper horrid, says that it is better to end well and begin badly than the other way about. But we don't pay any attention to Willie; he is a back number. On the 15th, off the Gulf of Peñas, we raised a collier which confessed to being bound for Valparaiso. She had slipped out of Montevideo after Coronel, evaded our cruisers off the Plate, penetrated the Straits, and was busy toddling up the coast to bring joy to the hearts of von Spee's engineers and much gold to her Dago owners. She had 5,000 tons of good steam coal, which is now ours. This lucky capture—Assistant Paymaster Willie calls it a forced purchase and has entered up the cost in his books—has solved our worst problem, which was how to get back to our base after emptying our bunkers in the ragging match with old man Spee. We have taken off all that we can stow in the *Ark Royal* and left the collier in an uncharted creek, where we can find her again when we want her. A prize crew is in charge with orders to open the seacocks if an enemy heaves in sight. The late crew of disgusted Dagoes—who hadn't in the least expected to run up against the White Ensign in the South Pacific—are safe under hatches. They are not exactly

prisoners, but we can't let them loose ashore ; they might give away our presence in these waters. Dad says that he is prepared to risk war with the mighty Republic of Uruguay. In the meantime he has paid the Dago skipper a very good price for the coal.

'We can now keep the sea for three weeks if we don't eat into our bunkers with too much high speed work. We have heard nothing yet of von Spee, though we are easily within wireless range of him, and our own aërials are silent. We have a powerful installation which is going to get talking presently—when we are a thousand miles out to the West and are playing at being a squadron !

'I suppose that you have begun to spot the little game of the ingenious corsair who commands us ? We are going to give ourselves out to be the armoured cruiser *Defence*, supported by the *Carnarvon* and *Cornwall* and a couple of auxiliary cruisers which were off the Plate when Coronel was fought and have just had time to get round here. Dad wanted us to be the flagship of four Japanese battle-cruisers, but the wireless operator struck. He said it would be difficult enough to be four or five English ships whose code letters and wireless equipment he knew, but Japanese wireless was the limit. He didn't know enough about it to deceive a child, let alone a lot of scientific Germans just out of the Far East. So Dad had to put up with remaining English. "If," said he, "we could have made von Spee think that a squadron of Japanese battle-cruisers was out thirsting for his blood, we could have kept him here till the *Invincible* and *Inflexible* had arrived to wipe him up. He won't be afraid to search for the *Defence*, *Carnarvon*, and *Cornwall*, and will be eager to make a second Coronel meal of them. Still, if we can keep him busy for two more weeks, till the end of the month, we shall have done our work. What rather worries me just now is the beggar's silence. He may have left Valparaiso and be on to us at any moment. The sooner we are far out to sea the better." This was on the 16th, and for the next three days Dad kept the *Ark Royal* going night and day at twenty knots, steering on a long curve far into the Pacific.

'On the evening of the third day, when we were a thousand miles out into the Pacific and somewhere about the latitude of Santa Maria Island, Dad came into the wardroom as usual and told us that von Spee's Telefunken was beginning to flicker through into our wireless room. The Germans had damped their sparks so as to keep the ranges short ; still, we could just hear. The messages were not clear enough to read, but our chief operator thought that he

had detected seven installations. "If von Spee is out with seven ships," said Dad, "that will mean his five cruisers and two colliers. He wouldn't turn out in that strength unless he were going for a long voyage. We will edge in a bit and try to make sure. To me it looks as if the German squadron had started for the Falkland Islands and that we were about due to begin. I have decided," he continued quite gravely, "to become the battle-cruiser *Australia*, and to keep on the other little lot. You see," he continued, when we had finished laughing, "I am afraid that von Spee will ignore any squadron which has nothing in it faster or more powerful than the *Defence*, but he can't ignore the battle-cruiser *Australia* on his flank. With her twenty-five knots of speed and eight twelve-inch guns she could catch him and make a mouthful of him before ever he reached the Falklands. She chased von Spee as far as the Fiji Islands in September, and could have got here if she had been ordered up, so we must make free to rope her in." Dad went on to explain that the wireless operator had a list of the pre-war code letters of all the ships which we were going to impersonate and would keep up a running fire of messages from the flagship to the others in an obsolete Admiralty code. "We want von Spee," he said, "to read enough to learn what ships we have and approximately where they are. I have left the corroborative details which are designed to give verisimilitude to our operations entirely to Tompkins: I don't myself know the first thing about wireless."

'This latest twist of Dad's agile but ignorant mind made me doubt whether he were not relying too completely upon the expertness of Tompkins and the mysterious elasticities of wireless telegraphy. For if any ship can so easily pretend to be any other ship, or even a whole squadron, why has not the device been used before to the great confusion of the enemy? Dad, when I proffered this view in open wardroom, brushed it aside. "It may have been done for all I know," said he airily, "and if it hasn't, we will set up a precedent. It will not be the first time that we have wriggled out of a desperate situation by irregular devices. But for Griggs and his fantastic gadgets we should have come by our end long ago in Christchurch Bay." I wonder if Dad is really so confident as he professes to be.

'I have had a long talk with Tompkins in his cave of wireless sorcery and have come away convinced that Dad is excessively sanguine. Tompkins says that our installation is powerful enough for anything; we have a Poulsen arc which can send at night for

an indefinite distance. I never knew before that wireless waves travel twice as far by night as by day. He says that we can pretend all right to be the *Australia*—if the Germans are fools enough to believe us—and can send out orders to imaginary consorts. But what are the enemy going to think when they don't pick up any replies?

'A flagship transmitting messages to a squadron which has not the common civility to acknowledge them will not sound exactly convincing. When I asked if we could not reply to our own messages and keep up the illusion that way, Tompkins sniffed. He says that we can vary our wave length—it is done constantly in order to baffle a listening enemy—but that we can't vary the character of our installation, which has a distinct individuality. We have to do with the Germans, says Tompkins snappily, who are the best electricians in the world. Nowadays the distance and direction of a ship putting forth wireless waves can be approximately determined by those who receive them, so that, apart from the individual character of its equipment, one ship that pretended to be two would be spotted at once. I must say that this talk with Tompkins has left me rather depressed. As an ignorant outsider Dad's scheme had impressed me by its plausible simplicity; now that I have done some investigation in the cave of Tompkins, it remains simple with the simplicity of Simon, but has altogether ceased to be plausible.'

Dickie's artless letters have now brought my narrative to November 20, when the disaster of Coronel was just three weeks old, and von Spee was within ten days of finally setting out with his cruisers to capture the Falkland Islands. How he arrived there on the morning of December 8 just in time to be gobbled up by the squadron of avengers which had steamed into Port Stanley a bare twelve hours earlier, has been told many times and belongs to history. But what has never been explained is his long delay, pottering up and down the Chile coast, all through those precious weeks during which his destiny was being determined. Half his ammunition had been shot away during the bombardment of Tahiti and in the costly fusillade of Coronel; but since he had no means of refilling his magazines in Chile he could not have been delayed by his shortage of shell. It is known that he was much embarrassed by lack of coal and of suitable colliers, for he could not risk the long trip from Valparaiso to the Falklands until full preparations had been made for coaling on the return journey. He

knew that much English coal had been stored in the Falkland Islands, but he could not be sure of laying hands upon it. What Dickie Grenville has written of the solitary enterprise of the *Ark Royal* convinces me that von Spee's coaling arrangements had been completed, and that he had definitely started about the evening of the 18th or the morning of November 19. His movements were slow—for he was tethered to the sluggish seven knots of his colliers—but if that voyage of his had not been interrupted he would have arrived at his destination while the *Invincible* and *Inflexible* were yet two thousand miles away. It was interrupted, ten more days were lost to von Spee, and the frail *Ark Royal*, which sacrificed herself to make him lose them, came gloriously by her end. For the second time in English naval history a Grenville pitted one ship against an Armada of enemies and gained imperishable fame in the annals of his country.

'It was on November 20 that we began to speak,' wrote Dickie, whose letters travelled to me months later unspoiled by any Censor, 'and the effect was instantaneous. The night was still and the electrical conditions of weather favourable. Speaking as the *Australia* we called to the imaginary *Defence*, *Carnarvon*, *Cornwall*, and *Orama*, gave them precise orders as to their courses and where to find us, and ended by warning them not to reply nor to communicate with one another except by visible signalling. After this loud effort, cast crackling into the void of ether, we fell silent and listened—or rather Tompkins listened. Von Spee must have been almost due east of us and quite a thousand miles away. He may not have been able to read what we sent—though we deliberately used an obsolete Admiralty code—but he must have realised instantly that a very powerful wireless apparatus, which was certainly that of a big English warship, was talking far out in the Pacific. Tompkins reported that the Telefunken calls, which he had been picking up and reading for hours past, instantly ceased. I like to picture to myself those German ships, slowly bound for the Horn and the easy capture of the Falklands, suddenly stricken dumb as our loud shout from the empty Pacific fell upon their startled ears. All through the night we cruised to and fro, moving little, but in the morning we put on speed and steamed to the south-west at some eighteen knots for ten hours. This was in order to get a substantial shift in our position so as to worry von Spee's experts when next we began to talk. That evening, the 21st, we shouted again, a good hefty shout, kept up for a quarter of an

hour, and then stopped as suddenly as we had begun. "Our performances," remarked the Commander drily at dinner, "remind me of a small boy pulling a house bell violently and then running away. We seem to have rung up old von Spee to some purpose, for we haven't had a whisper from him since last night." Tompkins was less confident when I visited him in the course of that evening. He admitted that our weird wireless tactics had probably puzzled the Germans, but refused to believe that we could really deceive them. They will know, he said, that we are only one ship and won't bother about us. I pointed out that they had kept extremely quiet themselves, which suggested that they had some counter game on hand. "Of course, they are not going to let us know where they are or what they are doing," grumbled Tompkins. "They will keep in touch with one another by sight. If by any misfortune they take us seriously and start out to look for us we shall have a merry old time. We can't get back to our collier with all those German ships in the way, and all this trotting up and down is going to empty our bunkers damned fast. I shall never see bonny Newcastle again." He will stick to his duty to the last, but there is nothing of the fighter about Tompkins.

'Dad says that we are doing fine. He thinks that von Spee has either headed north again for Valparaiso—which he uses as if it were a German base—or has cached his colliers somewhere and is out on the rampage after us. Dad seems to think that being chivied about the Pacific by five angry and exceedingly blood-thirsty cruisers is the grandest of sport. "We will evade them as long as we can, for we are out to gain time for our own squadron. But if we are discovered we will fight. You will have a chance then to show what your guns are worth, Dickie." "I shall," said I, emphatically and gloomily, and the rest of the mess roared. They knew what I thought of my guns. "They were re-lined by Cammell, Laird," quoth Dad. "When?" I asked blandly, and it was Dad's turn to laugh. "They must have been re-lined after being salvaged from the *Middleton* about 1906, not later, you bet."

'When I climbed up to the bridge next morning for my watch I had a new surprise. The White Ensign was gone and in its place fluttered the yellow and scarlet of Japan! Dad, who by now has shed every scrap of formality—he says cheerfully that we are all in the soup together—grinned and explained. "If a German cruiser happens to see us it won't do any harm to give them another puzzle. Their poor minds will be torn between the crashing

wireless of a big English ship and the war flag of Japan. They will think that the Pacific crawls with the Allied Navies." Dad does not worry himself about a casual German cruiser. He has the heels of most of them, and could put up a sort of fight against the light stuff of the *Dresden*, *Leipzig*, or *Nürnberg*, though, of course, those big demons, the *Scharnhorst* and *Gneisenau*, would make a cullender of us in no time. This was on the 23rd, and since we announced our presence on the 20th, not one flicker of a German spark has come to the ears of friend Tompkins. We give the Germans a call once a day, or rather night, just to harry their nerves a bit, but except for that little attention the opposing Fleets—Fleets sounds good, doesn't it, Bennet?—cruise in the most chilling of silences. I find it hard to believe that there is an overwhelming enemy away yonder below the belly of the eastern horizon. There may not be, for it is quite likely that von Spee has gone upon his way and left us to fool about here on our lonesome. I am beginning to wish that something would happen. We are all getting strained and irritable, though Dad does his utmost to supply us with entertaining theories upon the enemy's movements. He tells us that in the sailing ship days fleets cruised within a few hundred miles of one another for months and even years without once sighting each other's topsails. It makes me homesick to talk of sails. I shouldn't be quite so dull and nervy in a sailing ship; there would be more to occupy my mind. I keep watch, and go through gunnery control drill, but nothing happens through all the weary days. Very gladly would I swap this Northumberland Avenue of an hotel, with its gilt and cedar and Parsons turbines, for the smallest of Real Ships.

Dickie wrote no more in his log, and when the mass of paper reached me by a safe hand the last sentence in it was that which I have just quoted. Dickie, with the other survivors of the glorious *Ark Royal*, had travelled overland from Valparaiso to Buenos Ayres and thence sailed for England and home. From Instow he despatched to me a brief note telling with what shrinking terror he had entered that widowed nest and with what proud joyfulness he had been welcomed. Those brave creatures, his Mother and Betty, had refused to put on the trappings of woe or to speak of their husband and father as of one dead. To them he was never more alive, though his body lay miles deep in the hungry Pacific. 'When we got the telegram from the Admiralty,' said Betty, 'I

cried and Mother cried too. For Dad was Dad, and we should never see the dear old thing again. But when we heard what he had done I threw the black clothes I was sewing out of the window and marched down to the village in my brightest colours. Oh, Dickie, why couldn't I have gone with you? Nobody would have known that I was a rotten girl.' His mother talked to Dickie quite frankly. She said that Grenville, away from his proper work, had been mouldering in idleness, that she had almost welcomed the frightful war for his sake, and that she was more glad and proud than she could say that he had at long last made good the wasted years.

'He died slowly here for fourteen years,' she said, 'and then lived for three splendid months. And his name will go on living for ever and ever. I want to hear about every minute of those three months, every single minute, Dickie.' So Dickie told, concealing nothing, and his mother listened dry-eyed.

Dickie, with the two rings of a Lieutenant, was ordered off to First Battle Cruiser Squadron, and I saw nothing of him until early in 1916. Then, one morning before breakfast, he marched in upon me with the dust of a night journey from Invergordon thick upon his blue uniform. My wife and I, who love him, fell upon his neck, and Dickie fell lustily upon our victuals—which were not yet inhospitably rationed. Then, his hunger satisfied, I led him to my study, showed him the unfinished pages of his log, and demanded of him the Rest of the Story.

'From November 20 to 25 we saw nothing of von Spee and heard nothing. Every evening we rang him up and then did what the Commander called "a bunk" for a couple of hundred miles at eighteen knots. We zigzagged a lot, but our general trend was south-west, so as to bring up at our hidden collier when the coal ran low. As I wrote in my log, we knew nothing of what was passing in the seas beyond our horizon. But Dad felt pretty sure that von Spee could not afford to leave us out of account, and that every day we could keep him on the Chile coast was a day given to our battle-cruisers. The *Invincible* and *Inflexible* are voracious coal eaters, and we knew that they would be obliged to travel at half speed for their long southern voyage of nearly eight thousand miles. It was up to us to gain time for them. We did gain it, but we paid a big price—a big and bitter price.'

Dickie paused, and I saw that he was thinking of his father, that well-beloved friend now lost to him, and interposed gently, 'He

paid it willingly, Dickie, joyfully. If Grenville could have chosen the time and occasion of his passing he would have chosen just that.'

'Yes,' said Dickie. 'He told me as much before. . . . I am a selfish beast. But how lovely it would have been if he could have done his work as he did and come through alive as I did.'

The dear boy was silent for a few minutes and then went on with his story.

'Towards sunset on the 26th we had come to within three hundred miles of the coast and were about the same distance south of Valparaiso. Dad had decided to give von Spee one more clear call and then bolt off for the collier and the Falklands. Our stores were running low and we could not cruise at large much longer. I was at my Gunnery Control station on that last evening and Dad was on the upper bridge with me. Willie Pinchin was there, too. He followed Dad about like a dog, and loved him in his own queer way almost as much as I did. We had not seen a ship of any kind since we left our collier and did not much expect to see one. It came as rather a surprise to us when the look-out man aloft called. Presently we could all see the two masts of a steamer raising the horizon to the west under the sun. Dad turned his glass upon her and instantly classed her as a warship. She must have seen us when we saw her, for she altered course heading towards us at speed and showed her funnels. Dad with his long telescope could see more clearly than I with my binoculars, and he spotted the stranger very quickly. He laughed and made a queer skip upon the deck, a skip which was almost a dance. "We've done the trick, Dickie," he cried out, "done it, done it, done it! That's a German light cruiser—one of old Spee's. The *Nürnberg* or *Leipzig*, I can't yet be sure which. But it is one of them. So von Spee is still upon the Coast, and he can't get down now till the battle-cruisers come."

'I don't hold myself up as a hero—I am a bit of a coward, except in a wind jammer, which I understand—but I was honestly almost as pleased as Dad was. It was such a relief to know that our work had not been wasted that even I took no thought of the risk to ourselves. It was a bigish risk too, for if one of the light cruisers was within sight of us the others would not be far off. And we were not exactly equipped to fight a whole squadron. "What are you going to do?" I asked. Dad hesitated for some minutes and then said, "It will be dark in about two hours. We will bolt off then and make knots for our collier. But I should like to have a smack

first." We had cruised always ready for action, so little needed to be done. I got on to my guns, the six-inch and the four-inch, and the gunners stood by while Dad turned the *Ark Royal* and headed her towards the enemy. All this time the Japanese war flag had remained aloft. Dad left it there until the action began. He wanted to give the Germans a puzzle in identity. But when at about ten thousand yards we saw a flash and heard the whine of a long-range shell, the White Ensign was run up and Japanese flag struck.

'It was quite a pretty little fight with the *Leipzig*—for that was the ship—and I really enjoyed it. She had the best of the light, for while the sun shone upon us and showed us up clearly, she was partly hidden in the haze on the horizon. We had the bulge in speed and could keep beyond 10,000 yards, at which range her light guns could reach us but not easily hit us. They had to be fired very high, and the bunched salvoes fell very steeply. Every now and then I whacked off a six-inch proj.; and that wonderful old John, who could shoot with a drain pipe, actually plugged her once in the centre funnel. My guns must have been less bad than I reckoned them. For more than an hour we carried on a practically harmless exercise in gunnery. The Germans shot admirably, but they had to elevate their four point ones some thirty degrees, and though they often shot us up pretty close, they never once brought off a real hit. The sun was nearly down and we were thinking that it was about time to say good-bye when the look-out called again. We were all facing to the west, of course, where our enemy was, and were not giving a thought to the east behind us. When the look-out gave us a ship on an easterly bearing I got rather a shock, and Dad, spinning round, put up his glass at the newcomer. The sun was just on the horizon and showed her up like a searchlight. For about five minutes Dad stared at her; then he deliberately shut up his telescope and turned to me with a strange look on his face that I had never seen before. He had gone a bit yellow under the tan and had a twisted far-away kind of smile, as if for the moment the *Ark Royal* did not exist and his mind had concentrated on scenes far distant. I believe that during those few seconds Dad tasted of the bitterness of death, that he saw Instow and Mother and Betty for the last time and silently bade them farewell. It all passed very quickly, and Dad, cheery as ever, moved over and put his arm through mine. "Dickie," he whispered, "yonder ship to the east is a big chap with four funnels, the *Scharnhorst* or *Gneisenau*. I expect the *Scharnhorst*, for when von Spee sets a trap he pulls the strings of it himself,"

"It will be dark soon," said I. "Can't we give him the slip?"

"No. For an hour he will be able to see us against the after-glow as he did Cradock at Coronel and can shoot us to rags. It is all up with the *Ark Royal*. But nothing matters now, Dickie; the work which we came out to do has been done." He squeezed my arm and said no more at the moment. A little later, when the *Scharnhorst* was rising up clear to see and we were steaming south at our full speed of twenty-two knots in the effort to evade her, Dad spoke again. "If I had not stopped to play long bowls with the *Leipzig*, von Spee would never have caught us. But what is written is written. Willie always said that the *Ark Royal* would come by her end gloriously in the south. It is not bad for an auxiliary cruiser to hold up a squadron of real warships for a week. Yet we have done it, Dickie; nothing can alter that."

'We were slightly faster than the *Scharnhorst*, which, about six miles in shore of us, was also travelling south at full speed. The *Leipzig* still showed up far off in the glow which followed the setting of the sun. To those in the *Scharnhorst* we must have stood out in our turn against the yellow screen of sky just as the *Leipzig* did to us.

'The ships were nearing one another as von Spee edged in, and though we were the faster we could not draw clear in the time available. Already the *Scharnhorst* was within range and could let loose upon us with her heavy guns if there were any danger of our getting away. I expect that von Spee wanted, if he could, to capture us and to learn the game which we had been playing. He still did not surely know that he had only one ship to deal with. We had for days past been sending out messages to a whole imaginary squadron. Dad had fully provided against capture; if the *Ark Royal* were not sunk by gun fire he would blow the bottom out of her himself. The bombs had long been fixed in place and could be touched off from the engine-room an instant after the last connexions had been made. I am rather glad to remember that I never thought once of myself. I vaguely realised that I should probably be dead in an hour or two, but I was so fully taken up with joy at old Dad's wonderful success and at the honour which would come to him, that I never bothered about my own skin. By instinct, and by Dad's example, I thought only of the Service.

'There was little to do. It was really not worth while to fire our poor six-inch guns at an armoured cruiser, and until von Spee

began to shoot at us we left him alone. Our one chance was in our turbines, and we went all out with every boiler in full blast. There never was a real chance ; von Spee could stop us whenever he chose.

‘He did not keep us waiting very long. We had drawn about a mile ahead of him as he edged in towards us, but he still had us well to the west and plainly silhouetted. Towards the end we could not see him at all—just the flashes of his guns. He wasted little shell on us ; we were unarmoured, while he carried eight point two-inch guns with projectiles of nearly 300 lb. weight. One of them getting well home would sink us. There never was what you could call a real fight when the *Ark Royal* came by her end. Von Spee’s first shot flew like a roaring train over our heads, and the second was about a hundred yards short. Then he got us straddled—he had gunners as good as John himself. We replied with the six-inch, shooting at his flashes, for it was growing very dark out where he lay to the east. But though I did my best I could not take much interest in the gunnery business. We could put up a sort of fight with the *Leipzig*, but against the *Scharnhorst* hadn’t an earthly. After a couple of his heavy shell had come aboard of us, von Spee stopped firing. Why go on when those shots had done our business ? The first carried away the fore six-inch gun, blew five men to bits, and left a hole in the deck as big as the coaling hatch. The other pierced the deck amidships and burst over the engine-room. It brought us up helplessly staggering. The bridge was not touched by either shell, but by the rottenest luck a flying splinter from the wrecked fore’sle gun dropped into the brow of us and cut open the side of Dad’s head. I was still directing my guns and didn’t see him drop, but Willie was at him in a flash and did what he could. It was not till I looked round for orders that I knew that Dad was down. The second shell in the engine-room made it useless to go on firing ; worse than useless, for our gun flashes helped the *Scharnhorst* to see us. I left the Control and went over to where poor old Dad lay. The surgeon had come up and wanted to sling him below, but I said “No.” If Dad was mortally hurt, as the surgeon said he was, I wanted him to be left on the bridge. Let him die where he had served under God’s sky. You won’t want me to talk about that. Mother said I was right.

‘It had now grown quite dark, and after Dad had gone down in so beastly unlucky a way—we had only a dozen killed, though a great many were injured by the shell which burst over the engine-room—after Dad had gone down I forgot all about the *Scharnhorst*.

She had stopped firing and was lost to sight in the darkness. We were reminded of her by the white beam of her searchlight, which fell across the bridge and showed everything up bright as day. She had come up to within half a mile of us and began to signal with a lantern. Dad was down and the Commander was badly wounded, so the signal was brought to me. It was very irregular, for there were two lieutenants senior to me somewhere. The signal ran, "What ship is that?" I replied, "His Majesty's ship *Ark Royal*, Captain Richard Grenville." My answer must have gone at once to von Spee himself, for the *Scharnhorst* drew in quite close, and the next enquiry was whether our Captain was all right. I answered that he was very badly injured and that the ship was sinking. Just then the senior lieutenant came up to the bridge and took over from me. He arranged that we should transfer the wounded to the *Scharnhorst* in boats and then surrender ourselves, though not the ship. Von Spee agreed. I was greatly impressed by his tender anxiety for Dad. Again and again he asked after him, and said that he would send over his own surgeon with all appliances for gentle removal. Before ever I saw von Spee I felt kindly towards him.

'There was a swell on, but the sea was not rough. Most of our boats were uninjured, and we were able, with the assistance of the *Scharnhorst*, to transfer every one safely. I would not allow Dad to be slung over the side in a Neil-Robertson stretcher until all the others had gone. Dead or alive, he must be the last to go. Just before the boat left with him and me on board the Engineer Lieutenant blew the mines which we had laid in the *Ark Royal's* bottom. I think she would have sunk without them—she was badly torn underwater—but the mines made sure work. I had only time to reach the *Scharnhorst's* rail before our *Ark Royal* took her last plunge and disappeared. The searchlight was held upon her until the end.

'The two surgeons, our own and the German, had Dad taken down to a large cabin, which had evidently been specially prepared for him, and I followed. They then completed their examination of his wound and told me the result. It was hopeless, they said, and a matter of minutes; Dad would probably never become conscious again. But here they were wrong. We were all standing round the bed when a tallish officer entered, stepping softly. He wore a short beard and moustache, and I was struck at once by his bright blue eyes and his air of capacity. He was the kind of man who takes

charge of a situation whatever may be his rank—you know the type. He spoke in a whisper to the surgeons and then turned to me and held out his hand. "You are my old friend's son?" said he in English as good as my own. "I am very, very sorry for this most unhappy accident." I murmured something, I don't know what, and he went to the bed and bent over Dad, who had not moved or spoken since he had been hit. At that instant, as if friend spoke to friend through the Shadows, Dad opened his eyes and saw von Spee. "Hullo, old man!" he said in quite a strong voice. "It's jolly to meet you once more. What has happened?" Then Dad's memory came back, and he laughed, actually laughed. "I've led you a pretty dance these last few days, old fellow, and dished up all your plans." Von Spee laughed too, though rather ruefully. "You put the wind up me, Grenville," said he. "I've been in the devil of a stew and been hunting for you all over the Pacific." I slipped up and grasped Dad's hand while the two friends were talking, and von Spee, at a sign from his own surgeon, stood aside. The end was very near. "We've had a good time, Dickie boy," whispered Dad weakly, "the best of times. They could not have been bettered. I have seen Mother and Betty and said good-bye to them. There is nothing for them to regret." He pressed my hand, and . . . I don't think, Bennet, that I can say any more.

'They buried Dad at sea, and our own Chaplain read the English Service. When all was over the Admiral summoned me to his cabin and spoke very frankly. "If any one else but my dear old Dick Grenville had played the fool with me and held me up for a week, I should be furious. But I can forgive him that and more. Years ago we were closer than brothers. I couldn't go on with your wireless calls ringing in my ears every day. I knew that only one ship was speaking, but didn't know what ship it was. Besides, where there was one, others might be also. Grenville has lost me a week, for I must get up north again to coal before I can make things lively at the Falkland Islands of yours. Of course your people are putting up some devilry there; they would. Still, I know pretty well what I have to meet—the *Carnarvon*, *Canopus*, and that sort of stuff." He took a quick sidelong glance at me, but I was expecting it and kept a wooden face. "If I was the sort of Hun your people call us, I should put the thumbscrews on you, young Grenville," von Spee went on. "But for one thing, I haven't any thumbscrews in the ship, and, if I had, wouldn't use them. If I put all of you ashore and set you free, will you give

me any information that you have?" I said that I wouldn't, of course, and he smiled. Von Spee had a very charming smile. He was a white man, white all through. "Of course you wouldn't," he assented, "you are Dick Grenville's son. I wasn't asking you seriously, for I shall put you all ashore. I haven't time to make prisoners and no wish to be bothered with them. I will put you ashore and lend you what money I can spare. You will need some to get up to Valparaiso. Pay me back if we live, or don't pay me back. It is all the same to me. Do you realise, young man, that your father has in all probability cost me my life and the lives of all my men? We have lost an invaluable week, and if, when we get to the Falklands, we find ourselves up against heavier stuff than we reckon upon, it will be your father's fault. Yet I don't worry. Sooner or later your Fleet is sure to get me—and if you don't the Japanese will. I shan't live very long, Grenville, so that there is no time to waste in malice."

'We couldn't have been treated more kindly than in the *Scharnhorst*. Von Spee had given orders that we were to be regarded as guests. In the wardroom the officers made us welcome—they all spoke English well, though few of us had any German—and I could not wish to meet a more decent lot. Perhaps there are Germans and Germans. For those whom I met in von Spee's squadron would never have done the dirty things one hears of at home. They were a fine sporting lot. I saw the whole squadron at von Spee's unofficial base, where he had collected coal and stores. There he filled up and there he landed us all. To Willie, the A.P. and Treasurer, he handed over what remained of the *Scharnhorst's* stock of gold. "You will need it more than I shall," said he. "There is enough left in the squadron to last our time." When the ships, concentrated now after their hunt for us, sailed away for the Falklands and their deep graves in the Pacific, we watched them go and found it very difficult not to wish them God speed. Von Spee was an enemy, but a gallant and generous enemy. Peace be to his ashes and glory to his name.'

MESOPOTAMIA: THE LAND BETWEEN THE RIVERS.

BY MAJOR-GENERAL SIR GEORGE MACMUNN, K.C.B., D.S.O.

'MILES and miles and miles of b—— all,' in the simple diction of Atkins the Hoplite, stretch the plains of Mesopotamia. All England knows about Mesopotamia, and a place called Kût, and a goal called Bagdad, and a hot place they pronounce Bäsra. They know also just a few vignettes from the history of what is now getting on for three years. The early glories of Shaiba, the quick turned triumph and quicker tragedy of Ctesiphon, and the long-drawn agony of Townsend's Kût.

Some inkling perhaps they have of that period of building by Sir Percy Lake and General Maude. The forming of a large marine, the assembling of railway material, the eternal quarrel with marsh and flood and sandbank. But the real Mesopotamia, 'the miles and miles and miles,' through which Atkins is for the nonce tramping, as tramped Greek and Roman legions, back in the ages, is, as yet, unsung. And yet fate and prophecy bid fair to ordain that the English shall know something more of Mesopotamia, that historic 'land between the rivers,' which men also call Turkish Arabia.

Let us therefore gaze on the aspects of the land that meet good Atkins from college and office and Dials, as the British transports bring him up that Empress of Waterways, the *Shä'tt el Arab* or River of the Arabs, and also dip into some of those countless aspects which the past recalls.

For seventy miles from its mouth to Bäsra and for perhaps forty more, ships of the deepest draft can sail up the *Shä'tt*, impeded it is true for the present by an 18-foot bar at the mouth, which is easily dredged hereafter—ships easily pass each other in the fairway—and the banks for miles are edged with palm gardens, that wonderful tree of life that brings sustenance of all kinds to its owners. The level green of the palms is lightened by a fringe of mulberry trees, and oleanders of surprising flower. Up and down the *Shä'tt* sail the sea-going as well as the river craft of the sea-faring Arab, as ancient and daring a mariner as ever the Phœnician and the Norseman. The great sea *dhow*s are often models of old Portuguese brigs and caravels with high poops and great curved

stern sheets, with ancient binnacle and brass-bound wheel. Gun-ports pierce the sides in tiers, and the force of habit, so potent and so enduring in the East, has enacted that dummy tiers of gun-ports be painted on the poops of the lesser craft. The Arab sailor is orderly, and the *dhow* will pipe a uniformed crew over the side, to take the Arab *naukodar*¹ to call on a Turkish or Persian port officer.

But the crews are simple souls, apt to murmur one with another when a voyage is unduly prolonged and the vessel out of her course. On such occasions the aged captain will assemble his crew, and promise a revelation. Out of perhaps a century-old nautical almanack, held upside down, a grimy finger-nail will trace the long *f*'s, and finally he will announce in triumph '*Inshallah!* we shall arrive in port in three days' time.'

There are many ports, and something should by rights turn up!

Into this home water of Arab craft the navigating fleets of Europe have been penetrating these last five hundred years, as Portuguese ports of other days bear witness, along the shores of the Persian Gulf, and John Company's liners in later days, till Colonel Rawdon Chesney and Captain Blossé Lynch came overland from the West and built steamers on the upper Euphrates as a Roman Emperor had built his craft before them.

Down the Euphrates to the Shä'tt and out into the Gulf and back steamed Chesney's river craft *Tigris* and then turned north to Bagdad, forerunner of the Lynch line of Tigris steamers.

Just before the Mutiny in India, the Shä'tt saw a British fleet and transports come in the days when the Turk knew his best friend, to bring the Shah to his senses, with Outram and Havelock in command. Persia was brought to reason in time for those leaders to hurry back to harder tasks, and since those days the shipping of Europe has slowly increased in the Shä'tt, till even the tardy German discovered the mighty river and all she might mean for trade. And now, since the Turk flies once and for all his true colours, the Jolly Roger of slavery, of oppression and ruthless murder, the navies of England have made the Shä'tt el Arab their own. Processions of transports, of storeships and cruisers come and go in the mighty waterway. Bäsra, the ancient port of Mesopotamia, now seethes with ocean and river steamers—the Mersey with the chill off. The whole of the Arab river craft ply for the British, and the Tigris is white with their sails. Arabs

¹ Skipper.

unload ocean ships and pile high the river barges, and roads and railways grow apace beneath their hands.

Slowly the word has gone forth, that there is no mistake as to which is the right side of the fence, and the Sheikhs note that, while the Turk has essayed to destroy the Arab peoples and break up their clans, the British have come to build and unify an ancient nation. The word has gone forth that the yellow man must go back to the East, and that Western Asia is the land of Shem and Japhet, of Semitic and Japhetic peoples of Semitic speech and not the agglutinous vocabulary of the Mongol—for the almond eye remains in the Anatolian Turk, till he looks first cousin to a Gurkha or a Manchu.

There are some foolish writers who like to babble of the clean fighting Turk, when in reality he is but a docile savage in the control of ruthless men. There is something appalling in the docility of the slave races, the German, the Turk, the *fellah* beneath the Pharaohs. To the Turk it may be ordered 'Kiss the children' and he will kiss them, or 'Bayonet the children' and he bayonets them, even as does the kindly German of former belief. The *fellah* bidden by the Pharaoh will flog the life out of his comrade, even like the other slave races the Turk of Hulugu, and the Hun of Hohenzollern, and the place for the yellow man is away East.

Not that the Army in Mesopotamia has any love for the hosts of Arab tribes that have fished in the troubled waters between Küt and Bagdad; their savage cruelty to wounded has made them hated by all. That may be due to the Arab's conception of warfare, for where he has accepted the British, he is wholeheartedly a worker for a price, and an appreciator of order, wishful only to be governed and given the benefits of progressive rule. To which he adds a very great desire to acquire wealth, and is therefore open to proposals which will develop prosperity.

Into the Turk-clogged progress-desiring port of Bāsra has come the daily increasing activity of a large military base, which must however usurp all use of the port till war be done. The improvements for war purposes are however chiefly those that are needed in peace, save perhaps that time the future works are built with speed rather than durability as governing factor. Wharves, waterworks, electric lighting, metalled roads, bridges, dockyards spring up on all sides, and the great Jew settlements that date from the Captivity take heart of grace and tender for contracts and peddle tinned salmon and cigarettes for Atkins.

The population of this great seafaring port is a mixed one. Jewish, Greek and Chaldean traders jostle for the business of war. Kurd and Arab, Lur and Bakhtiari labour and build and garden. It is a bustling population, for the flourishing date gardens at all times bring trade and shipping, and the 'Tree of Life' feeds and finds fuel and building material for tens of thousands.

To the medley of peoples, the British have added many. Every race in India has contributed to the Army, and with them also negro troops and watermen from the West Indies, and Chinese artisans to build huts and work in the dockyards. Roads and railways push up along the waterways. River steamers from the rivers of India and Burma, from the Irrawadi, from the Ganges, and the Brahmaputra, chunk against the current of the Tigris.

The Nile too has added to the gaiety of rivers, and, if you please, County Council steamers have come under their own steam from Battersea to Bâsra, aye and Bagdad too, remarkably fine boats for their size. Those who would moralise on the divinity that doth shape our ends may well marvel that the *Edmund Ironside* and the *Christopher Wren* and other denizens of Chelsea Reach should tow munitions of war into Bagdad.

To feed with all the munitions of war an army fighting five hundred miles away, and also feed the railways with material, this river fleet from the waterways of the Empire works all day and far into the night, and porters from the four corners of India and Africa load barges and unload ships for this, the real river war of history.

And all the while the Tigris and the Euphrates roll on down to the sea, as they have rolled since Eden, to the almost historic days of the Deluge, since Abraham went north from Ur of the Chaldees, and Hammurabi ruled in Shinar, since the glory of Shumer and Accad, and the Empires of Shalmanezar, and Ashurbanipal and the hosts of Syria. The British rail along the Euphrates passes at the foot of the great pyramidal pile of brick at Ur, on which stood the Temple of the Moon. The great square bricks stand set in bitumen, many of them bearing in cuneiform the Royal stamp of Nebuchadnezzar, the enthusiastic restorer of ancient temples. The temple pile remains eighty feet above the mounds of dust that cover the foundations of erstwhile prosperous Ur, the river port that ruled a tidal estuary.

At Ur is to be seen one of those small cross checks on ancient history, which in one way or another is a feature of Mesopotamian

archæology. Among the layer of bricks firmly set in bitumen are to be found intact pieces of matting even as the reed matting of to-day. Old Herodotus records among those many minor details, which are a satisfying feature in his history, that the Chaldeans place matting in the bitumen setting of every tenth layer of bricks. It is pleasant with one's own eyes to be able to testify to the accuracy in detail of the late Mr. Herodotus.

On the way from Kût to Bagdad the dreary embankment of dead and dry Babylonian canals close the horizon, and often have furnished ready-made entrenchments for belligerents. All the world knows how the British and Turk fought within sight of the great Arch of Ctesiphon, the Arch of the Hall of Audience of the Sassanian capital.

The curse of the Bible prophets—'their cities I will make into heaps'—has been amply fulfilled in Mesopotamia. Babylon, Nineveh, Warka Lagash, Eridhu, all are mere heaps of grey dust, from which the spade alone extracts history. The Palace of Khosru almost alone stands as a ruin, in the usual acceptance of the word. The great Arch of Ctesiphon is modern as Mesopotamian history goes, a mere 1500 years of existence, but it stands as it was built of footsquare bricks, set in the comparatively newly devised mortar that had replaced the bitumen. It stands a huge hall of one single arch and one of the great façades of its right front with it. High up in the walls, defying time as bravely as the brick work, lie great timbers that must be cedar of Lebanon, and perhaps the oldest woodwork extant. Among the ruined mud walls of the city site stands and bagged gun emplacements and the empty tins of derelict bivouacs.

Opposite Ctesiphon, which the Turks call Suleiman Pak, lie the ruins of Seleucia, the great Greek capital, where Seleukos founded his dynasty on the death of his master Alexander, and moved the seat of Greek government from Babylon to the Tigris. Naught remains but heaps of dust and a mighty wall now cut by the Tigris immediately opposite Ctesiphon, and that curious sense of Greek dominion which stretches far over Asia to the Frontiers of Afghanistan and the Punjab itself. And over away from Seleucia a very few leagues lies the battle-field of Cunaxa where, a few centuries before Seleucia came into being, Xenophon started back over the mountains to distant Trebizond.

In the midst of this shadow and presence of extreme antiquity Atkins marches unconcerned, somewhat disturbed by Bible names

that the Army has given to unnamed sites round Kūt. It is desirable for artillery purposes to identify such mounds as may exist, but when these are officially called Sodom and Gomorrah, Atkins may be excused from writing home that he is in the midst of Bible scenes.

Among the early spots occupied by the Army that first reached Mesopotamia was Qurna, at the junction of the Tigris and Euphrates, a hot moist kingdom of the wet bulb if ever there was one, where *Anopheles Pulcherrima* at first made the Army her own. There is an old Sumerian legend which places Eden at Qurna, oblivious of the fact that the Persian Gulf must have extended far above it. The Army read the story and adopted it; Temptation Square and Adam's Lane are official spots among the palm groves of the Arab Town. To one of the bull-dog breed marching in with a pack and a hundred round of ammunition, with a temperature of 112 and the wet bulb over 90, an officer confided the fact that this was the Garden of Eden. 'Well, Sir,' said the product of undenominational teaching, 'all I can say is that no wonder the twelve apostles deserted.'

However that may be, the British Army is touching history and archæology unknown at every march, and the glamour of it is biting deep into the minds of those who are not too weary to think. Every outpost lies on some village or city mound, ancient bricks are dug for roadways, coins and vases turn to the light beneath the trench spade—slipper coffins, aptly described as 'babies' baths,' break before the platelayers. Men may dream any moment of coming on such revelations as charmed the best years from Layard and life from George Smith, and of finding treasure like to the Royal Library of Nineveh.

The aeroplanes themselves add to historic research in a manner hardly realised. The giant city sites of Assyria, acres of ruined fields, yield no plan to the wanderer therein, and even traverse and theodolite can hardly find the secrets of plan and design which the aeroplane photos map clearly. Lines of walls that are hardly visible on the flat show clearly to those above, and the ground plan of Opis and Sammarah are becoming an open book.

The Assyrian and Chaldean blocks at the British Museum will have very different meaning to those who have motored to Babylon, flown over Nineveh, or climbed to the top of the Temple of the Moon at Ur of the Chaldees.

Perhaps the tracing of the story of the book of Genesis is the

true fascination that Mesopotamia has for those who have time to read. The great boats of the Euphrates have the identical lines of the toy ark that can be bought in Regent Street. Where a pent roof has been added for our purposes, the two are one in shape. A Euphrates 'bellum' arranged as a sick barge is the toy ark of childhood. Is that toy ark an authentic tradition in its shape? It is almost certain to be. The Euphrates boats are pitched inside and out with pitch, as was that ark. In these same bellums, some as large as seventy tons, we may find British batteries sailing the Euphrates, and a modified menagerie could easily walk on board. One more suggestion of the toy-shop tradition strikes the casual observer. The tribes-people from the hills who work on the Tigris and Euphrates wear high black felt hats, a topper without a brim. Are Mr. and Mrs. Noah really correctly dressed?

Then on top of the discovery of the ark comes the more serious reading of a parallel version of the Bible story of the Flood found in the cuneiform in Layard's tablets from the Royal Library of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh, copied or collected possibly from Sargon's library at Accade or Erech, older than Ashurbanipal by perhaps 1800 years. Were the stories of Genesis the household stories of Chaldea 4000 years ago? It would seem so, when from Babylon is unearthed a seal with the representation of the Temptation, Adam and Eve, the Serpent and the Apple-tree. Then who, having seen the floods in Chaldea in 1916, cannot realise that two feet more would have submerged the whole land?

Such are the fascinating reflections that fill the minds of many, and who realise that the very names in use of the stars they march under are the names that the Chaldean astrologers gave them—so far away in the mist of time that human imagination almost fails to grasp the story.

It is before the ancient stories that the Bible of the Captivity and the prophets are records but of yesterday. The Tombs of Ezekiel on the Euphrates, of Queen Esther and the prophet Daniel at Susa are extant shrines. On the lower Tigris, the most beautiful of all vignettes is the hedge-sparrow dome of the Tomb of Ezra, set in a small grove of palms for all the world to see. Jews of the Captivity fill every town and ply that gift of trade they learnt in Babylon, and ancient rabbis step from old-world blocks.

The story of the advance from the trenches of the *impasse* (trenches 350 miles up the Tigris even at this stage), the months of hammer and tongs, of spade and bayonet, culminating in the never-

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to-be-forgotten crossing at the Shāmrañ bend, the recovery of Kūt, and the pressure that brought the Army marching for dear life on Bagdad and the retreating Turks, cannot be told here. Nor the joyous arrival at Bagdad to save a mercantile town torn from mob and tribal atrocities, nor of the severe fighting that followed as the reinforced Turks strove to regain their own and hem us in, for those are the property of accurate history to be recorded on granite. This is rather the story of the sidelights that shine on the Army's progress.

Nor is the trade and prospect of Turkish Arabia, whatever may be its future, a suitable subject for discussion here. It will be remembered how Sir William Willcocks spent several years in Mesopotamia on behalf of the Turkish Government studying the waterways and the ancient and existing systems of irrigation. He envisaged the old smiling Chaldea with its ancient crops in all their abundance, with cotton and other paying crops added thereto. The country grows alfafa (or lucerne), and whoever can grow alfafa can fatten stock, the one commodity the world is really short of. Flocks and herds crowd the land, but the people for extended agriculture are sparse. Twenty years of good sanitation, so that the countless children come to maturity, may work wonders.

The Arab, however, is eager for progress, and therein lies the hope for the future. Civilisation and government are eagerly looked for. Do the military authorities even spit-lock a road through the scrub by the Tigris edge, and forthwith does every man, woman, and child proclaim it the King's highway. Oil pumps and machinery are eagerly used, while the military organisation of labour and native craft have proved the Arab to be a first-class worker, if well and sympathetically handled. The farmers, and even the marsh Arabs, have hurried to work on roads and railways. The great Bedouin encampments on the Tigris, the long rows of brown camel-hair shelters, watch the steamers passing by, and the white-bearded sheikhs, like Abraham 'sitting in their tents in the heat of the day,' send their young men out to work on the earthwork of the permanent way.

Of Bagdad itself who may speak? It is literally the modern Babylon, built with bricks stolen therefrom, or from Seleucia and Ctesiphon and the dead cities of the plains, as Port Said is built from Tel Tennis, and as new cities from old, all the world over. Its dome and its minarets stand out among its palm groves from afar. A few of its mosques and vaulted khans date from Haroun-

al-Raschid, but the city, though picturesque, is modern save for the bricks that lie under its whitewashed walls. They have seen Nebuchadnezzar in all his glory, yet the city they have built is upstart. The Great Gate of Murad, closed since the conqueror entered, was blown up by the Turks, perhaps lest the English should open it to enter by that way in solemn significance, the which is not an Anglo-Saxon trait, for the Anglo-Saxon rarely does anything of intention that is solemnly significant.

Above Bagdad, where the Army now waits what may befall, the ruin field is thick also. Nineveh lies ahead by Mosul, and Calneh of Assyria, and all that Assyria stood for in building and magnificence, changing to the memory of Greece and Rome. The Tomb of Julian the Apostate bears witness to one of Rome's failures on the Tigris. Though Vespasian penetrated to Shushan and the Diz, yet was Mesopotamia always a scene of disaster to the Imperial troops, a land which overstrained endeavour.

In spite of 'miles and miles and miles of — all,' the dead canals ever raise their promise to the prospect of central government, and the groves of dates and poplars and mulberries on the inhabited shores show that the drinking earth is full of promise. Chaldea is full of Temple ruins. The dead course of the Nahrwan canal and its ghostly village mounds but wait the touch of the irrigation engineer. The Arabs bear many but raise few, and a generation of dispensaries and kindly medical aid will populate the banks of the canals that are to be. Even those there be who dream of finding a real home for the long-stapled cotton, that other great want of modern economics, and one again for the wheat, that Herodotus guarantees to bear three-hundredfold.

LIMELIGHT.

BY NANCY PRICE.

THE Resident Physician of the Brixton Hospital for Women and Children must—under the terms of the foundation—be a woman, and experience has made it clear that she must be sturdy and cheerful, with a temper of gold and a constitution of iron, for the work is heavy, the pay small, the Chief capricious, and the patients poor.

The last Resident's chief qualifications had been a Gold Medal and a 19-inch waist. It was not surprising that she had broken down after six months' acquaintance with the post. Madge Heron came as her successor. The Chief took note of her ample chest, her well-developed feet, her strong face, the supporting pressure of her hand, and decided that she would do.

Everyone was satisfied with Madge Heron's appointment—except the exception of a certain Dr. James Reid. She had met the surgeon before, when she had taken a temporary post at a lunatic asylum where Dr. Reid was Resident Physician. He was hard up in those days, and 'mental work' pays. Madge had accepted the post for experience, Jimmie for money. She hadn't known him many weeks before she realised there was little he would not do if thereby he might gain either applause or wealth. She decided he was cruel, ambitious, and unscrupulous, and hoped she would never have the misfortune to work with him again. He acknowledged a certain enjoyment in having a human being utterly at his mercy, and Madge felt such a man should never have been a surgeon. Just as there are butchers who kill because it's their job, and butchers who kill because they enjoy it, so I am convinced it often is with surgeons and their methods. An operating theatre where 'Bonny Jimmie' ruled was not pleasant.

Christmas passed, and the spring being heralded by the usual crop of measles and influenza, even the sturdy Madge felt tired after her forenoon work. When one has seen thirty patients between eleven in the morning and four in the afternoon, in addition to an almost unceasing accompaniment of the usual hospital work, only pausing for a hasty lunch in an A.B.C., one has a right to feel tired.

Madge dropped into the only comfortable chair in her room and hoped for tea. Instead of which :

‘A gentleman to see you, Miss, in the drawing-room—a Mr. Frazer.’

Madge could remember neither friend nor patient of that name, and she went downstairs wishing the gentleman at the ends of the earth.

‘Hallo ! Madge.’

‘Alan !—You !—This is a surprise !’

‘Yes, I don’t often dig you out. But I have some news for you—quite a stroke of luck for me. The family will yet be proud of me. I am busy rehearsing—’

‘Still the stage ?’

‘Don’t look reproachful, Madge. I have a fine part in the new play at the “Victoria.” What do you think of that ? No more butlers, valets, or lawyers’ clerks. If I do decently with this I am made, Madge old girl.’

‘I am glad. What sort of part is it ?’

Alan Frazer’s eyes sparkled.

‘Oh, top-hole. You must come and see the play. Do you realise you have never seen me act yet ?’

‘I see enough tragedy and comedy every day. I don’t want to go to the theatre in the evening for more.’

‘Now, Madge, no frills ; you really will enjoy *this*. It’s something in your line.’

‘Really ?’

‘You see, there’s a man in it who goes mad—oh, it’s very dramatic, I can tell you, and cleverly worked out. The scene is laid in a South American Republic—in Rio de Janeiro—and the local colour is fine.’

‘What a child you are still ! You won’t be satisfied till you have told me the whole plot. Go on, get it over, and then let’s have some tea.’

‘Well, as you are so thrilled, I will be brief, though you don’t deserve to hear it. The people of this Republic grow tired of their President, and they send a deputation to bring back the son of the late Emperor. They had murdered his father in the Revolution, you know—’

‘Before the play starts, I hope ?’

‘Yes. Unless you happen to be Shakespeare it’s not wise to have more than one murder in a play. You would never get the

stalls in. Well—among these deputies is a queer sort of fellow who believes in clairvoyance, and he has a twin sister who is a medium, and they all consult her like an oracle. . . . The girl's part is a fine one——'

Madge sat up a little in her chair.

There was a knock at the door, and a matron, with a dark blue gown, a jingling chatelaine, and flowing white draperies about her head, looked in.

'Please, Dr. Heron, may Nurse Wentworth go out?'

'Certainly.'

'Thank you,' said the Matron, and shut the door again.

'I say, don't they ever leave you alone for a rest?'

'Our rest is one long knock at the door with a question at the end. But go on. Does the prince fall in love with the clairvoyante?'

'No, but *she* falls in love with *him*, and that makes her lose her power. Now, in the palace there is a party scheming against the prince, and they have reasons for wanting to win over the man—I mean the girl's brother—to their side——'

'It is rather complicated.'

'Not at all. You are not half listening. It's always difficult to describe a play briefly. It is perfectly simple when you read it. Do wake up, Madge—or if you'd rather, I'll clear out.'

'Don't be a silly, old boy. I am more interested than you know.'

'Righto. Well, the Revolutionaries have led this brother to suspect that the prince is not dealing fairly by his sister, and the brother is the kind of overwrought fanatic who, getting an idea into his head, can't get it out again. He is quite loyal to his sovereign, but would murder anybody to avenge his sister. Still, he won't move unless the girl herself accuses Don Luiz.'

'The prince?'

'Yes. So he determined to make his sister fall into a trance, with the object of questioning her; but the girl knows she is no longer a true clairvoyante, and for a time holds out against him. Gradually, however, he succeeds, and his will steadily, relentlessly, overcomes hers till she drops into utter unconsciousness, and gasps out everything he *expects* her to say.'

The tired eyes of the Resident Physician flashed.

'What an iniquitous scene to write!'

'Why? From the acting point of view it is splendid. The tragedy lies in the fact that not a word of what the girl says in the trance is true. It has all been conveyed to her unguarded senses

by the man's own sickly imagination. He lets her words work on his brain till he gets fairly mad, and when Don Luiz is taken prisoner by the rebels, Manuel Real—that is the brother—contrives to get into his cell and murder him.'

Madge sat in deep thought. Then—another knock—'If you please, Dr. Heron, may Nurse Decher go out as far as the dairy?'

'Certainly, let them all go.'

The nurse retired with the precipitation of a Jack-in-the-box.

'One would think I kept a ladies' boarding-school. Sorry, Alan; and which character do you take in this most unpleasant play?'

'I play Don Luiz—actually the leading part, though perhaps Real is the more interesting character.'

'And who plays that mad individual?'

'We had a real bit of luck there. The author chanced on just the man—a Brazilian. He makes one's blood run cold in the scene with the girl in the last act and when he murders the prince.'

'A Brazilian?' Madge was now rigid with attention. 'What is his name?'

'José da Motta.'

'Oh! And so this man goes mad over a fancied wrong and murders the prince. I do not think it is a particularly savoury subject for a play. Who wrote it?'

'Oh, it's a collaboration. Arthur Wheat—that's good enough, isn't it?—there's not much you can teach him about stage-craft, —and a Doctor something or other, I forget the fellow's name. It wanted a doctor to help with a plot of this sort.'

'Was the doctor's name Reid by any chance?'

'I believe it was. Why, do you know him?'

'Casually—professionally.'

'What a lark! You really must come and see the show now that you know it is written by a member of your profession.'

There was rather an uncomfortable pause, and Frazer felt his cousin had really no enthusiasm.

'I am keeping you, Madge?'

'How ever did you come to realise that? You are much more quick-witted than you used to be when you tried to catch rabbits with salt. Do you remember?'

'Yes, and you tried to catch trout with a bent hat-pin. Those

were grand days. You were certainly more attractive in pin-afores than in overalls now. You are getting positively stodgy, Madge, whereas I have soared into the realms of high romance.'

'Yes, how we change! You were rather a nice little thing in your knickerbocker days. Well, we must reminisce again when I have more time. You must warn me before your next visit. I'm afraid you must go now, and, sad to say, without your tea. So sorry, but I promise to come and see you at the "Victoria." I wish you every success, as you know, but if I were the Lord Chamberlain I would never have licensed that play.'

'Why, what is there against it?'

'It's not drama!' (Madge had started from her chair, and her words came angrily and in hot haste.) 'It is not drama, but pathology. It belongs to the records of a lunatic asylum, not to the annals of the theatre. Surely men go mad and become criminals quite often enough without having the way to such disaster demonstrated to them in the name of dramatic art?' She paused for a moment; her cousin looked slightly annoyed. 'Well, I believe after all my imagination is stronger than yours. I really must run, or I shall be late—good-bye, and good luck.'

So Frazer went away to dine with some friends at a West-end restaurant, and Madge Heron took her bicycle from a little shed near the zinc-roofed mortuary, and spent the rest of the day in an unsavoury slum.

Bonnie Jimmie Reid was through his morning's work, and was waiting to see Dr. Heron before he left the hospital. There was a fashionable 'cut' about the man that could not be hindered in its expression even by the overall he wore. He sat gracefully on the end of the operating table, conscious of the decorative effect he was producing amid the surrounding sinks and swabs.

The Resident entered, looking unusually flushed and worried.

'What's up? Is it a case?'

'Yes, a very serious case,' Madge answered, with slow emphasis.

'Dr. Reid, I have a cousin on the stage.'

'How disgusted your people must be.'

'He called on me yesterday afternoon and told me about the new play that is to be produced at the "Victoria."'

'Yes.'

'Your play, I believe?'

'I am partly responsible.'

'I suppose it is the play you were writing when you were at Rex Asylum?'

'Yes, that's the one. I've collaborated with an experienced playwright since then, who has given it the necessary polish—turned it inside out and made it actable.'

'The play is founded on the case of the Da Motta twins.'

Dr. Reid stopped toying with the artery-forceps, and looked darkly and uneasily at the Resident, as he replied:

'I should say that an author or a playwright was at liberty to choose any subject on which he is an authority. Really, Dr. Heron, I did not know you were such an inveterate theatre-goer as to take an interest in my efforts.'

'My cousin plays the part of the young prince in the piece—'

'Oh, so young Frazer is your cousin? How interesting!'

'And Da Motta is going to play the murderer.'

'Well—'

'Is that a coincidence?'

'Not exactly. I always believed he had talent and took a fatherly interest in his career. I saw him give a most remarkable performance of "King Lear" a short time ago at Birmingham.'

'And so you have arranged he shall play the part of a lunatic?'

'Why not?'

'Dr. Reid'—Madge raised her voice, for she felt she was talking to a wall—'do you know the risk you are running?'

'Yes—the risk of having my play the success of the season.'

'The *sensation* of the season, with a lunatic in your cast,' returned Madge, her voice unsteady from suppressed excitement.

'What nonsense. I myself discharged Da Motta from the asylum as cured, a year ago.'

'Yes, within six weeks of his threatening to break my head with a golf club! You were alone in your opinion, Dr. Reid.'

'I frequently am alone in my opinion, Dr. Heron. But that fact has apparently not handicapped my career so far.'

Madge could scarcely control her temper at the man's self-satisfaction.

'He may be safe now, but are you prepared to guarantee that he will continue safe during the run of your play?'

'José has been acting continuously since his discharge from the asylum. But if you are nervous about your cousin you had better advise him to break his contract.'

'You know that is impossible. I should have to give an

explanation, and that would involve me in a breach of professional etiquette.'

'Dear, dear, so it would ! How women have changed these days. They are beginning to acquire quite a sense of honour,' said Reid, smiling, as he toyed with the artery forceps.

'Why didn't you give his sister, little Josefina, her discharge ?'

'Because, my dear lady, she needed watching. She was far more liable to lapses ; she had memories and dwelt upon them—a dangerous habit you women have. The instant alone is ours, and we should make the most of it. The past is a malicious germ in a woman's blood.'

'So she is still there then ?'

Reid smiled indulgently.

'I suppose questions are one of a woman's privileges, as curiosity her birthright. I am afraid I am too busy to recognise either to-day.'

'It doesn't matter. I will make inquiries at the asylum.'

'Oh, if it is of such real interest to you, I will, of course, give you any information I can. I did discharge the girl from the asylum. She is in a private nursing home—the one in Cavendish Square.'

'Really !' Madge paused. There was more than one home in Cavendish Square. Thoughts and conjectures crowded through her mind, all too dark and sinister for expression or belief, she told herself. 'You have gone out of your way to help them,' she continued slowly.

'Not at all. They have sufficient private means for their needs.'

The surgeon's voice rang a trifle hard.

'She, I remember, was beautiful as a child is beautiful ; she thought and saw as a child—often pathetically weak, easily led. You found her an interesting experiment, Dr. Reid ? I used to think you might even succeed in teaching her to become a woman.'

'An interesting case, very ; they both were. But, alas ! there are times when even we doctors must fail. The Da Motta story was most remarkable. Some day I must tell you, Dr. Heron, and you must—'

Madge gave him no time to say more. She squared up to him like a man who wanted to fight. If only he would fight her, if only she might fight him, and really strike good hefty blows ; blows that would wipe out that smile—that would leave him less spruce and

contented, less sure of himself. But such delights were not for her; they were the peculiar property of that luxurious class which, so far as she could see, obtained everything free except drinks—gin, gilt, the gutter;—and then there was always the Women's Hospital at their service. She must allow herself no licence. Any display of emotion would give him the advantage. It would be condemned as 'Nerves,' and nerves meant incompetence. So far she had avoided this disparagement. She held herself well under control, and none of the Staff had ever yet been able to say that she was troubled with nerves.

'I also was interested in the Da Motta twins. It may surprise you that in my opinion your excessive kindness to his sister aggravated José's madness.'

'That's ridiculous. José was, of course . . . grateful; jealous in a way—these South Americans always are—and he was an emotional fellow altogether; quite a genius in his way. I hope he will prove the success I anticipate in this play, though he little knows who is giving him the chance.'

'Oh, so he doesn't know?'

'No.'

'Or where his sister is?'

'Not at the moment. She did not wish to see him until after the operation we found necessary is over.'

Madge bit her lips. The man's atmosphere benumbed her. She gazed silently at the empty seats of that 'theatre' where only tragedies are performed.

'I am greatly interested in my cousin's career,' she said at length, 'and would like to see him act. Could you get me a seat in the first row of stalls for your play?'

Dr. Reid opened his eyes.

'Certainly, if it will give you any pleasure. For which night would you like the seat?'

'For every night the play is acted—then I can go when I wish.' She spoke slowly and, raising her head, looked straight into his eyes.

'My dear Dr. Heron! Your cousin must be *very* attractive. Well, I shall have to try and arrange it. Will that satisfy you?'

'Thank you. It's a pity you are not going to play the handsome young prince yourself—good-bye.'

Madge darted out of the operating theatre and down the corridor, unable to trust either her temper or her nerves another moment.

As she entered the ward at the far end, one of the nurses just found occasion to say :

‘I would like to wring Bonnie Jimmie’s neck for him.’

‘I wish you would,’ Madge continued fervently. ‘In the meantime bring Mrs. Piggott her hot-water bottle.’

The matinée was over at the ‘Victoria’ and several of the members of the company had found their way as usual to an excellent restaurant, which adjoined the theatre, and were busy discussing, in a good-natured way, the shortcomings of the absent members of their cast.

‘José ought to take a holiday. The part is getting on his nerves, and as for Maud, why, she looks a wreck. I sometimes think people should not produce plays of this kind. The pretended lunatic of melodrama is bad enough. But it is going too far to have the part of a madman played by José.’

‘I don’t agree with you,’ said Alan. ‘It is an excellent study of mental pathology. The truth is often unpleasant ; but it is what the world wants.’

‘What the world wants is more beefsteak for anæmic people,’ growled another member of the cast.

At this moment Frazer’s understudy sauntered towards them.

‘Hullo, Ancram,’ said Frazer. ‘Why, I thought Da Motta was with you ?’

‘Oh, I left him quite happy in the dressing-room experimenting in make-ups and practising your new death. Upon my word, Frazer, I wonder you gave in so calmly about the alteration. I should have made a fuss about it, if I’d been you. He’s spoilt your business in that last scene.’

‘It’s only a whim of his. I must humour him a bit now and then. The management are very keen on him. Besides, I don’t care much ; it isn’t as if it were the beginning of the run.’

‘He’s a selfish sort of chap ; thinks only of himself and his blessed sister. He’s making her as big a nuisance as himself. Yarned about her perfections on end before the matinée when we were dressing.’

‘I shouldn’t blame him for that,’ laughed Frazer. ‘Brotherly love is both rare and laudable in a man. But you have no right to complain, Ancram : he’s not in your room.’

‘Isn’t he ? He’s a regular Wandering Jew. I think the

chap's half mad. I hope he'll be more satisfied when he's seen his sister. He tells me she's coming along to see the show soon.'

'I don't quite understand how she can. My cousin, Dr. Heron, told me she was dying.'

'Good Lord! It would just about finish him if anyone told him that. He's half off his rocker already.'

'Well, anyway, it's no affair of ours,' said Frazer. He was not in the mood for gossip, and returned to the theatre rather earlier than usual.

The stage was dark and empty, and smelt of dust and gas. The scenery was piled up against the whitewashed walls. The trees of the forest leant against the pasteboard walls of the castle, which in their turn reposed against the prison cell. Confusion reigned supreme. The other side of the iron curtain the red velvet seats were shrouded in their coarse sheets, like an audience of ghosts. The daylight was struggling through chinks, putting to shame the tawdriness of the embossed gilt-work, the badly proportioned and useless figures—the frescoes which represented maidens in various moods, all equally ineffective; they always reminded Alan of the cheap Italian restaurants.

From José's dressing-room came snatches of South American melodies and a noise of shifting chairs. As Alan went near the door the noise suddenly subsided, and Da Motta appeared, looking pale and bright-eyed.

'Hallo, Frazer. Let's have a run through. This change will improve the last act no end—don't you think so? It's more natural, easier to feel. . . . Did I tell you my sister is coming to see the show, and I want it to go better than ever? You don't know how much I want to see her. She's the only person living that belongs to me. The doctors have done their best to keep her away from me. It has been so ever since Josefina got into their hands. It has been next year, next month, next week, she will come, and at last to-morrow, and always to-morrow.'

Women sometimes like to sympathise with a complaining woman, but men usually despise a man who cannot keep his troubles to himself. Still, Frazer knew José was tired and overwrought with a particularly trying part, so he swallowed his disgust and tried to be sympathetic.

'I am glad Miss Da Motta is better!'

'Did I say she was better?'

'Well, you said you were expecting her to come to the theatre soon.'

'Yes, yes, of course, she is coming. I hear she is coming. Let me show you her photograph.' José stooped over a box and proceeded to scatter letters, programmes, and a host of incongruous articles over the table and floor in his search. He dived into the box once more. 'There she is. Isn't she beautiful?'

Alan saw the face of a young girl very like José—scarcely pretty, he thought, though her eyes were quite wonderful. They were large and dark, and full of that unconscious knowledge which you see in the faces of Greuze's child-maidens, and which fascinates more than does their actual beauty.

'She is very like you,' Frazer contrived to say after an awkward pause. 'I say, you've got your room in a rare mess with one thing and another. Are those your new razors?'

'Harry Ancram's been talking to you. What else did he tell you about me?'

'Nothing, old man. We none of us know anything about you except that you just came and triumphed, and that you were the best Lear the provinces have seen. You mustn't mind if the boys gossip. It's really only because they know so little of you.'

Da Motta's eyes were full. Frazer disliked a scene and tried to edge away, but Da Motta stopped him.

'I know all you fellows hate me, despise me. I don't know why, but you do—I can see it and feel it. You never want me, no one ever did, save her—my little sister; she was so small and gentle. We were always together once, and I remember how happy we were. Then some trouble came—someone came between us—a terrible illness seized me; and then—I can't remember well what happened after that, we were together, but it was different—terrible. I remember there was someone to hate for her sake and mine, and someone who parted us again; but I forget—I forget. Now she's coming back to me, after all these years. Isn't it great for me?'

Frazer thought José more incoherent and excited than ever, and he left him in disgust.

'Da Motta cannot help acting on and off the stage,' he said to himself. 'He must have been born an actor, and cannot learn to be a man.'

'The Clairvoyante' was dying at last. It was not the kind

of play to prove popular ; it belonged to the category of *interesting* works that fill the stalls with enthusiastic dead-heads. It did not possess the homely scenes with touches of pathos and humour—those special features that appeal to the hearts of playgoers and call for their smiles and tears. The British public are naturally too healthy minded for such works to last long. They may have a morbid side to their characters ; they will go and look at a dead horse, watch with interest the man who has been run over, push and hustle each other for a good place to watch his agony ; but the sight soon becomes loathsome. That is why 'The Clairvoyante' failed.

It was the fiftieth night. Dr. Heron sat in a stall in the front row. She wondered how the actors could go on night after night with very little perceptible change. She knew every syllable of the play. The words ticked monotonously in her ears like a clock, with the same sleepy effect. Still, by dint of sheer determination, she always kept alert for that last act.

Behind the scenes the leading lady was talking to the 'at gentleman who wisely preferred beefsteak to philosophy.

'I can't understand why it is, but Da Motta is beginning to terrify me. I realise that he's playing the scene better every night, and it *may* be that. I feel that one night he may forget he is only acting and then—don't laugh at me, but just watch him and judge for yourself.'

Cooke was not laughing.

'I know what you mean,' he said. 'I played in a piece once where a drunken man blinded another, slashing him across the eyes in a sword fight. Da Motta gets drunk in that last act—it is the drunkenness of a madman.'

'Don't,' she said, 'you make me shiver. I feel as if something were going to happen—something horrible. Do you ever get a premonition like that ?'

'No, premonitions don't come to a man with my size "little Mary." I can't help feeling sorry for the boy to-night. His sister hasn't come after all. He had a telegram half an hour ago, and has been sitting quite silent with his head in his hands ever since, saying in a dull, hopeless voice—"She'll never come now, she'll never come now." I've never seen a brother so wrapt up in his sister. I hear they're twins, and there is always some subtle bond between such, I believe. I'm afraid this trouble will not help him to get over the new business in the last act.'

'That business of stabbing Frazer in the back makes me shudder. I hear Dr. Reid's on the stage this evening. I am quite curious to see him. Queer chap he must be never to have attended a single rehearsal.'

'Oh, well, probably he is too busy; and Wheat is good enough anyhow. He is the finest producer in London, and he certainly would not have allowed anyone else to interfere.'

'Why has he come to-night then? Do you think he is anxious about the alteration going all right?'

'I don't think that has brought him down, though I heard him say he wanted to see Da Motta before he went on for the last act.'

'Did he? Well, I don't think he will; the curtain is up.'

Da Motta came on the stage in that last act with a strange impassive face; his large eyes stared straight before him, as though he were blind.

Madge rose from her stall. . . .

Instead of the property knife with its harmless edge, Da Motta raised a bright razor. His eyes, which had before looked so blind, now possessed the glint in the eye of a beast who sees his prey and will spring. They were fixed on the O.P. corner, not on the prince, and with a frenzied laugh he shrieked out 'So there you are—at last—You parted us, and now you've—May your soul rot!'

Then a cry came from the wings. It was a cry straight from the throat, such as men utter for the last time; and 'Bonnie Jimmie Reid' fell dead.

Before José had time to move, a woman stepped quietly on to the stage, seized his arm, and looked firmly into those bright mad eyes.

The audience did not see this, for at that awful cry the curtain had been lowered to thunders of applause at the realism of Da Motta's acting.

As he looked at Madge, the frenzy died from his face. A puzzled sense of recognition passed over his eyes; then his hands fell limp and nerveless. With an effort he dragged out a few words, as if half asleep.

'Fancy—that—swine—using me—and my little sister . . . I remember—I remember . . .'

But he never quite could—and 'Bonnie Jimmie's' tragic end was deplored, while his memory remains untarnished.

SOME AFRICAN PROBLEMS.

BY M. E. RETIEF

WHEN the actual fighting in Europe is over and peace terms are under discussion, the continent of Africa will become prominent, for the reason that all the principal belligerents own or have interests in portions of Africa—England, Germany, Belgium, France, Portugal, and Italy, all own colonies; and England, besides being the largest colonising Power, acts as protector to various native territories. It will follow, therefore, that attention will be focussed upon Africa, and an understanding of her peculiar difficulties and problems will prevent mistakes and ensure that sympathy without which an amicable settlement will not be reached. England is by far the greatest and most successful colonising Power in the world, forming, as she does, a British Empire composed of federated self-governing States. With the wisdom gained by experience, she leaves matters of local importance to the people themselves, refrains from interference as much as possible, and she never did a wiser thing than when, after defeating the Boer Republics, she gave them self-government. Had she not done so, the war with Germany would have been a signal for revolt, the Transvaal and Free State would have thrown in their lot with the German colonies, and England instead of Germany would have lost most of her South African possessions. Instead her act of justice saved the situation; the country, torn and devastated by a three years' war followed by a five years' depression, had been enabled to pull itself together, and by union had consolidated its resources. The conquest of the German colonies could never have been achieved with so small a loss of life had it not been undertaken by men thoroughly acquainted with the conditions of the country and able to overcome the hardships and difficulties of transport. England has had no cause to regret her action, and the South African Union, controlled by men born and bred in the country, with the best motives for governing wisely—namely, that they will reap the consequences of any errors of judgment—and well acquainted with every condition that prevails, will form the nucleus of a stable civilisation spreading up throughout the continent.

No country has suffered more than South Africa from mis-

representation and malignment, not always deliberate, but due generally to superficial knowledge of conditions and hasty conclusions. The great idea seems to be to set out for a few weeks' tour through the South African colonies armed with a fountain pen and a notebook, keeping close to the mail-train route, spending a few days in each of the principal towns, being entertained by deputations of people in accordance with one's particular views, picking up impressions and scraps of information, and then to come home and write a book on the country dealing in an authoritative manner with such little matters as the native question, the poor white problem, the dual language question, the mixed labour question, and a few others which are engaging the attention of the best minds in Africa and England, but to the casual observer seem so easy of solution.

To most people in England South Africa is merely a spot on the globe where gold and diamonds are to be found in large quantities, but to the people in South Africa the mines are of minor significance, attracting foreign capital, owned chiefly by people alien to the country, and drawing large numbers of adventurers seeking either to make sudden fortunes or to fasten on those others who have made them; and the majority of those who succeed take this money outside the country to spend. There are a few men who have been notable exceptions to this rule, but in reality the mines play a small part in the life of the South African people. First and foremost South Africa is an agricultural country suitable for stock-raising, sheep-farming, corn and cereal and fruit growing, different parts being suitable for different kinds of farming. In many things it approximates closely to Australia, but in labour conditions and settlement it is very different. The former country, with climatic conditions very similar to ours, has a far greater export trade, and is better known in European markets for its wines, fruit, cereals, and meat, yet there is nothing grown in Australia which is not grown equally well at the Cape, the best of our wines maintain a standard hardly second to the best European productions, while if some of the great areas crying out for cultivation were used, we could supply half Europe with food; and we are half the distance by sea from England that Australia is. Why, then, does South Africa hang back? Because she has difficulties such as the sister colony has never known, and until she has found a satisfactory solution for these her outward progression must be slow. Perhaps now, when the sympathies of

English people have been stirred for the devastated lands of France and Belgium and Serbia, they can understand something of the desolation that followed on three years' war throughout a pastoral country. There were not magnificent churches and cities to be destroyed, but there were numbers of scattered homesteads surrounded by tilled lands won from the bare veld, green vineyards, rich orchards, and big shady trees grown with such infinite care to protect the cool white house, the scattered barns and native huts close at hand, and then the scarred and barren fields, neglected vineyards, mutilated stumps telling a tale of heartbreak and ruin no words can depict. The Boer War left behind it a desolation and financial depression from which the country did not recover for years, so many had been ruined, and the few who reaped a harvest were tradesmen who secured military contracts. Indirectly, however, this evil was productive of good, for the mass of people, particularly the back veld farmers, were brought to realise that the old somnolent methods that have prevailed, paralysing progress, were gone for ever. If a living was to be made, if food and comfort and pleasure were to be gained at all, it was necessary for a man to look lively, and, as our American cousins say, 'hustle,' and above all it was necessary for the growing sons and daughters to be educated if they were to stand any chance in the world of to-day.

Following close on the Boer War came a great demand for education, with education came a raised standard of living, and with a raised standard of living came the need for realising hidden possibilities in order to gain the means to satisfy new and hitherto unfelt wants. Union, with its pooling of resources and cohesion of government, gave the necessary impetus; from the first the Union Government aimed at restoring, consolidating, and developing the country, and how well it is succeeding may be seen by the steady progress made.

To-day one will find up-to-date methods employed everywhere in business, mines, or on the land—nothing but the latest and best is good enough—and the country is prospering. Yet we have only just found our feet, and it will be some time before we become a really great country for exports. The native question, however, makes the chief difference between South Africa and other colonies and affects the whole continent; no other country inhabited by Europeans has this problem in the same degree as we have. In Africa the natives outnumber the Europeans by about twenty

natives to one European. Practically all the unskilled labour is in their hands, domestic, farm, and mining, as well as in the trades. In towns and villages they form the bulk of the population; away back in the native protectorates, where the governing white race become fewer, they teem, and in Central Africa they reign supreme. Unlike the natives of India and the yellow races, the natives of Africa have behind them no ancient heritage of civilisation; they are descended from savages and aborigines, and where they come in contact with European civilisation and conform to the customs of their masters it is but a veneer, a semblance of the real thing. There is always the danger, never voiced lest the very utterance should set the dreaded forces in motion, but always present nevertheless, that should the natives combine against the whites they could sweep the latter into the sea and abandon the country to savagery. As Miss Caroline Kirkland remarks in her book 'Some African Highways':

'The natives of East Africa and Uganda resent the British dominion. They cannot shake it off. They live in apparent unity, and they try to enjoy a civilisation which is antipathetic to them. They hate work and they love fighting. The English force them to toil and have almost abolished their bloody intertribal wars. Apparent peace reigns, but the instincts and tendencies of savages can only be checked, not altered, in a couple of generations.'

And, again:

'There are certain workings of the African mind which no white man can follow or fathom. A glint here and there shows a hidden world unknown. These childlike black races have some savage potentialities which give a sinister quality to their *naïveté*. Friendly as they may appear to be, devoted as they certainly are in individual instances, it is a fact that the black races *do not like the white people*. The tenure of the Anglo-Saxon in Central Africa is rather like that of the animal trainer in a cage full of tamed lions and tigers.'

It is necessary for the well-being of the country that the white race should rule, but if they are to maintain an attitude of superiority they must live up to the standards set by the best of their race, and must avoid any descent to the lower morality of the undeveloped native. In their own territories under British suzerainty the natives are law-abiding and self-governing; but the

native is a child, no matter what his age or status—a child who never grows up—and those who have lived longest among them and are most successful in dealing with them understand this and treat them with firmness and kindness judiciously mixed.

An increase in the European population is much to be desired, but it is essential that this should be self-supporting, and not sink below the line of average respectability. The ne'er-do-well man and woman, besides being the burden they are to any community, lower the prestige of their race in the eyes of the natives and are a serious danger.

The majority of Europeans living in the South African Union, which includes the most populous colonies, are of mixed Dutch descent, and the Government, elected by proportional representation, is largely Dutch. As old residents the Dutch people are most careful to avoid any mixing with natives, and usually, no matter to what degradation individuals may sink in other ways, they struggle to maintain the purity of their race. This pride of race, however, has one deplorable effect in that it follows that the white man is superior just by reason of being a white man, that the nigger is the natural servant, and that no work involving physical exertion which can be performed by a nigger is fit for a white man to do. The climate has its drawbacks as well as advantages, and these are equally big. Following seasons of prosperity often come seasons of terrible drought, when nothing can save the stock or crops, and it takes all the husbanding of water possible to keep human beings alive. In these districts the prosperous farmers lose heavily, and can only hold on to whatever they are able to save, waiting for the turn of the tide, but the smaller farmers are often rendered destitute with their families. Also in isolated regions which have not been reached by education, and in which the people eke out a blind living among the bushes and sand, with no idea of any other mode, it comes to pass in time that the farm which provided a tolerable living to the couple who owned it and their children, when split up among those children with growing families is able to provide only a bare sufficiency, and when these in turn come of age and seek to marry is altogether inadequate. These two factors—the seasons of bad luck, when the weak must go to the wall, and the production of large indigent families—make the Poor White Question. There are in certain districts numbers of poor white families living out in the veld like animals, literally naked and starving, and quite intractable and unteachable. They live in grass huts or tin shanties erected by

themselves, for in that benign climate it is possible to do all one's living in the open air, and only a shelter to huddle away in at night or when rain falls is required. Unlike the natives, who, in their own tribes, build themselves kraals of quite substantial huts, keep herds and flocks, and grow fields of mealies upon which they subsist, the poor white usually makes no attempt at any cultivation at all, nor settles long in any one place, but drifts from one to another on the fringe of civilisation, begging sometimes from prosperous farmers, who are willing enough to give in the hope of helping the white man to find his feet. Sometimes a bag of flour, sometimes a portion of sheep, sometimes a live goat or a couple of fowls or basket of eggs will find their way to the huts, and immediately an air of plenty and prosperity pervades the family. No thought of the future obtrudes, no provision is ever made for the rainy day: when there is plenty the family feasts, when there is not it starves. The worst sufferers are always the children, unkempt and neglected, clad often in one ragged garment, without shoes or stockings, and alternately starved or overfed; they grow up like wild beasts, running to hide at the approach of any stranger. They are usually too far away to make compulsory attendance at school possible, and if this is possible there arises instantly the necessity for clothing, feeding, and conveying them. Cases have been known when a prosperous farmer, in real concern for the welfare of the race, has given at his own cost all facilities, providing school, teacher, clothes, food, and cart to convey the scholars, with the result that these utterly refused to be fetched, and when compulsion was used the families trekked hurriedly into another district. They will not work, nor will they learn, nor will they be separated. Efforts have been made to get girls placed in domestic service; young girls have been taken in a starving condition and placed with practical ladies willing to treat them not as menials, but as daughters, so that in the eyes of the coloured folk they should not rank as inferiors, and should acquire a knowledge of housecraft and good management, but the experiment is nearly always disastrous. The girl cries for her family and refuses to be comforted; she cares nothing for the strange and, to her, unnecessary conveniences of better living; she has not the least desire to learn anything at all, and any reproof will send her running away in a wild effort to get back to her own people. The boys are equally hopeless: they will not work like Kaffirs, they will not learn like Europeans, and yet there are numbers of these people, a drag on the country, marrying and bringing up families to take their places.

The Dutch Reformed Church and the Union Government are both working hard to solve the riddle of what to do with them, but so far no adequate solution has been reached. Labour colonies have been formed where instruction and assistance and land are provided for those willing to take, but though one can bring one's man to one's colony one cannot make him work. No sooner is it found that discipline and labour are required to earn the advantages held out, than he sheers off back to his old life of drift. Industrial schools for training the children have been tried, but the same difficulty prevails—the difficulty of getting them there and of keeping them there when got. It would seem as though the only hope of betterment lies in taking the children away from their surroundings when quite young and compelling them to remain in a suitable environment till trained, but this raises the thorny question of the right to break up families, to separate parents from children, and to interfere generally with the liberty of the subject to make his own life. If once we begin making poverty a ground for refusing to let the child remain with the parent, where shall we end? Yet it is impossible to leave matters as they are; for the sake of our own race the problem must be tackled.

The coloured question is confined chiefly to the big towns and industrial centres, especially Cape Town, and spreading up from them throughout the Cape Province. Any country where money is to be made attracts the flotsam and jetsam of other countries, adventurers of all nationalities, who come out with a hazy idea of making money, and, not possessing the energy or perseverance to master any useful calling, drift from place to place and sink lower and lower. Not being indigenous to the soil, they do not share the local feeling, and find in the semi-civilised native population more congenial companionship than among their own race. From these people spring the half-and-halves, the *café-au-lait* coloured, combining more often than not the bad qualities of both races with the good qualities of neither. The best members of the native races, knowing that it is usually the offscourings of the white race that seek union with their people, are utterly opposed to any intermarriage, and to the white race it is abhorrent. The brunt falls upon the unhappy offspring, which is neither one thing nor the other. In the schools an attempt is made to draw a hard and fast line, and schools are set apart for white and coloured children, no child with any definite marks of colour being admitted to the former; but cases have been known where a white child brought by a white father has

been admitted, while it turns out that a sister of the child with the same parents, but following in looks the unmistakably coloured mother, attends the coloured school. Only people who have lived in countries with diverse races can understand the difficulty and bitterness of this vexed question.

More often than not the half-caste tends towards the white side in tastes and inclination, although dark in colour, and any marriage into a purely coloured family is obnoxious to him; he can never be completely assimilated by either race, and if married to one in as evil a plight as himself, *i.e.* half-and-half, there are physiological results—weakness and tendency to early death of any offspring. It should be clearly understood by any European coming to Africa that intermarriage with the coloured races is a degradation.

A number of native men leave their kraals to seek employment as house-boys, ricksha-boys, agricultural labourers, and workers on the mines. They earn good wages, of which they spend very little, saving all they can. After a few years, when a boy has accumulated a fair sum, he throws up his work and returns to his kraal to buy a wife, or, if wealthy enough, two wives. The procedure for courtship is to approach the father of a desirable daughter and deferentially make an offer of so many head of cattle in exchange for the lady's hand. Should she be much sought after, the father may raise the number of cattle required to great heights, and it sometimes happens that a persistent swain returns to servitude in order to save enough to meet the demands of his future father-in-law; perhaps when he at last returns it is to find that he has been forestalled by a more successful rival.

Although the native returns to his kraal and resumes his former mode of living, it is impossible for him not to carry back a little of the knowledge gained from white people. Very often it is knowledge he would be better without, but sometimes it is useful knowledge, and these little fragments accumulating from many sources are bound to affect the life of the tribe sooner or later. No matter how rigorously we segregate the native, we cannot dispense altogether with his labour, and thus cannot avoid contact with him, and this contact must affect both parties for good or evil. We shall have to face the question of educating and civilising the natives, but the manner in which this is accomplished will be important. It would be useless to attempt to make the native a replica of the white man; not only is his development less, but it must by nature be entirely different. If any permanent

good is to be done, the seed of progress must be planted within the people and spread gradually from within outwards ; nothing but mischief can ensue from the foisting of an alien civilisation from without.

Religion will play a great part in the future of Africa. Mohammedanism is advancing from the North towards the central tribes and spreading quietly from the Malays in the South upwards. It is a religion which takes an extraordinary hold upon people living in hot climates, and when Mohammedanism once gains a footing the door is fast shut to Christianity. Quite apart from any question of religion, the political significance will be great if the vast native population becomes definitely Mohammedan or if it becomes definitely Christian, for the native tribes are not decadent, and their attitude in time to come towards the West will be coloured by their convictions. To quote Miss Kirkland again, there is

‘a characteristic peculiar to African natives, an ineradicable unfriendliness between tribes. Within the limits of a tribe or community they will share with each other and give mutual aid ; but there are no intertribal relations. Six years before at Tanga I had seen natives dying and dead in the streets—perishing from famine, while their fellow Africans looked on with indifference and gave them no aid because the sufferers were from the interior.’

Hitherto this ineradicable unfriendliness has been the white man's protection against native truculence ; in the event of a rising it would be always possible to pit tribe against tribe, Zulus against Basutos, Crikwas and Namaquas against Hereros, and so on, but if these tribes became linked with one another and all the other tribes of Africa by a common bond such as religion, and particularly one which takes so deep a hold as Mohammedanism, the result might be a growing animosity between the races. In justice I must say that the Malays, who are the only Mohammedan people I have had the opportunity of observing, are a law-abiding and loyal people. They are different in type from the African natives, and came originally from the Malay States under Sheik Joseph, who was exiled and landed at the Cape with a number of followers. They do not assert themselves in any way to the detriment of others, though many of the Malay men are going to Europe for their education, coming back as doctors and lawyers to invite their

people to competition with the white man. The danger, however, would not come from them, but, as it is well known, converts to a new faith are apt to go to fanatical extremes, and, taking into consideration the inherent savagery of the raw natives, the question one asks is, Would the more sober and educated leaders have power to prevent an outbreak should an impulse seize the horde?

It will be seen how desirable it is that there should be more Europeans in the country, but no scheme of wholesale immigration would be adopted by any of the Colonies. Speaking generally, South Africa is not the country for the unskilled labourer or the working man, his place is adequately supplied by the natives, and Australia offers more scope for his abilities, but young men of good education and with a desire to lead an open-air life might become valuable settlers. In going to a new country any young man would do well to gain some first-hand knowledge of conditions before settling, and a course of agricultural training at Elsenberg, the Government College in Cape Province, would bring him in touch with men whose business it is to know and study the best methods, and who, besides giving him the training he needed in whatever branch of farming he wished to take up, could probably put him in touch with farmers who had successfully farmed along those lines and might help him to obtain a footing.

Great Englishmen have felt the lure of Africa and given their lives to her service. Cecil Rhodes lies buried on the lonely Matoppo Hills, and beside him after the war will rest the remains of his friend and fellow English South African, Dr. Jameson. These were not small men, and the land which claimed their devotion must have much to endear it to others.

JEFF DAY.

READERS of the CORNHILL may remember a poem called 'On the Wings of the Morning' that was printed in the July number last year and signed 'J. D.' It was about the sensations of flying through clouds and in sunshine, and there were a freshness of feeling and a directness of vision about it that are likely to have impressed it upon the memory, and to have awakened interest about the author. 'Here is a young writer,' the reader may have guessed, 'untrammelled by literary traditions, seeing with clear eyes, and stating what he sees with vivid simplicity. He does not write as a literary man would write; but he writes musically, and he knows the difference between prose and verse. Probably he is a young airman, newly led to poetry by the wonders of flight.'

The guess would have been a correct one. This was the first serious poem that the writer had written: and he had time to write two more only, 'An Airman's Dream,' and 'To my Brother,' which were printed in the *Spectator*. The swift growth of power shown by the short series suggests to us that, had the writer lived, his name might have been added to the golden roll of English poets. As it is, his name is written clearly on the golden roll of warriors only: and, for the rest, he must be numbered amongst 'the inheritors of unfulfilled renown.'

Miles Jeffery Game Day was a Flight Commander in the Naval Air Service, and well known as one of its most brilliant young officers. He was born at St. Ives, Hunts, on December 1, 1896, of a family settled for generations on the banks of the Ouse. He was at school at Sandroyd House, and at Repton; and at eighteen years of age he received his commission as sub-lieutenant R.N.A.S. From the first he showed exceptional skill as a pilot: and he was chosen for work at sea that needs high technical accomplishment. But he was dissatisfied with the comparative inactivity of the life afloat, and secured his transfer to a fighting squadron on the Western front. Already famous in his service as a master of the art of flight, in France he became famous as a fighter also, and received the D.S.C. 'for conspicuous gallantry and skill.'

But when that announcement was gazetted the end had

already come, in a characteristic act of audacity and self-sacrifice. On February 27, 1918, to quote his C.O.'s account,

'He was shot down by six German aircraft which he attacked single-handed, out to sea. He had out-distanced his flight, I think because he wished to break the [enemy's] formation, in order to make it easier for the less experienced people behind him to attack. He hit the enemy and they hit his machine, which burst into flames; but, not a bit flurried, he nose-dived, flattened out, and landed perfectly on the water. He climbed out of his machine and waved his fellow-pilots back to their base; being in aeroplanes [not seaplanes] they could not assist him.'

Immediate and prolonged search was made for him, but in vain.

Such is the short record of his life, a record that can do no more than suggest the personality behind. The picture of that, a gracious and a glorious thing, can best be filled in by the words of one that knew him well, both in his service and in his writing.

'It was at H——, late in 1916, that I first met Jeff Day. I was sitting with E. C. in the gathering place of naval officers, the hall of an hotel, and we were, I remember, in a critical and discontented humour about England and the war. English people, we were saying, have too low a standard of industry and devotion: they make too much of their amusements and their leisure; for all their courage, they lack the spirit of aggression. "It comes to this," I said, "there are too many of us that are not 'all out.' " We agreed in that; and then C. called my attention to a young sub-lieutenant of the R.N.A.S. who was waiting for his tea at the far end of the room, a lad of small stature, with a bright, strong face. "There is a lad that would cheer you up," he said; and, when I asked why, "Talk of 'all out!'" he answered, "he is pure gold!" He called the sub-lieutenant over to share our tea, and we spoke of their common adventures in the North Sea, of the war in the air, and of how dull it was at H——.

'My first thought as he joined us was, "What a fine head! it is like that of some Florentine knight, modelled by Donatello who made the St. George." When he began to speak I felt at once (like all that met him) the attraction of his manner, so gentle, yet so absorbed, and so full of restrained vitality; of his velvet voice; and of his eager talk. "Here," I said to myself, "is a boy with a beautiful manner. He is very much alive, too, and interested in what he says. The things that he says come fresh from his thoughts; they are not said parrot-wise. It would be pleasant

to meet him again," and I schemed to do so. We were talking about teas, and he told us of a farm that he had found in a wood beyond the river, where there was still a good tea to be had, as good as before the war. "It really is a perfectly good tea," he said, and made us feel as happy as possible, because he himself was so happy in the thought of the tea. I got a promise from him on the spot that he would guide me to his farm the next Sunday.

'C. had spoken to him as "Babe" only: and it was not until he left that I learnt his proper name. I remembered, then, that I had heard in my ship some gossip about one Day. I had heard him spoken of as a young pilot in a seaplane carrier, who could do things with an aeroplane that nobody else could do. The Flag-Commander had been to see him fly, and they had made his hair stand on end, he had said, the things that he had seen, the loops and spins. It was an arresting thing that the airman of whom I had heard as a wonder of skill and daring and the boy who was so keen about his tea should be one and the same.

'We met on the jetty next Sunday and walked out to his farm beyond the river. He had first noticed the farm as he flew over it; and he and his shipmates had hunted it out and made it their meeting-place. The motherly heart of the woman of the place was quite enslaved by him: she greeted him then and always with great fuss and outcries. Here was Mr. Day; she knew the tea that he liked; fresh eggs, how many? (three); hot scones and butter, and her own jam. Mr. Day was the gentleman that did funny things to amuse her when he flew overhead. She wished that he wouldn't; it made her heart jump. Her tongue ran on and on about her Mr. Day, and the tea when it came had a plenty and a freshness that were a tribute of true affection. When we had finished it we went and looked at the young things on the farm, the chickens and ducklings and colts. They gave him keen delight; he was of their company, and knew their ways in play. His first favourite, though, was an old gander, that would put its head down and charge him the length of the field. It was a stout-hearted old bird, he said, and whenever he came to the farm he got up a row with it.

As we walked out along the shores of the tidal river that afternoon and he talked to me about the air, I began to feel like one on the verge of a surprising and fortunate discovery. "Here," I was thinking, "is something much more than a lad with a charming manner. C. was right; here is a warrior spirit keen and strong as a sword." And as we returned in the evening, and the restraint of strangeness grew less, I felt that the discovery had been made. "Here," I told myself then, "is something more even than a high warrior spirit; here is one that embraces with impetuous yet

delicate sympathy all vital and beautiful things. Vitality runs out of him in a bubbling stream. He has more enjoyment of all things worth enjoying, and he is better able to express his enjoyment than anybody I ever knew. Nor is his enjoyment mere animal good spirits. It has a deeper root in a quick humour for the comic element in life, and in keen appreciation of all lovely and hearty things, whether of the natural world or of the mind. When he speaks of some wonderful flight through clouds and sunshine, I can feel the air rushing past me, and revel with him in the miracles of light and colour that he has seen. But there is a better thing still. It is not about his own marvellous service that he likes best to talk: he is happiest when he is talking about country places, and especially about his own country side of river, fen, and mere. He loves them truly, and he has with them an intimate companionship. With his love and intimacy he can paint in his talk pictures of them so bright and actual that I can hardly believe that I have not been with him for long night hours in his boat upon the river, or lying at dusk among the reeds to wait for the homing waterfowl. He talks of them like a poet, I thought, a poet that has walked hand in hand with nature in her inmost dwelling place.

'When we separated to go each to his ship, I found myself still thinking about him, with delight and wonder. Can it really be—my thoughts ran thus—that here is one of those natures which we may dream about, but can hardly hope to find, a nature made after the manner of Philip Sidney, poet and knight in one? I have known in the war other men of transcendent courage and devotion, but they had not the poet's power of understanding the great value and beauty of life. I have known other men with the poet's power, but they had not the high qualities of courage and devotion that would have made themselves as beautiful as their poems. I have never known before one that combined these two things: but I believe that I know one now. And then I thought of Jeff's effervescent gaiety, and of his simple and youthful distrust of solemn and difficult things. How astonished he would be at these reflections! I reminded myself. But, in spite of that, I was sure that I was right: and thereafter the better I knew him the more sure I grew.

'Since his ship lay far from mine and the farm was remote, we could not meet very often; so we started a lively correspondence that went backwards and forwards in the duty boat. With one of his letters he sent me a pamphlet of Christmas jokes that he had written to amuse his ward-room. Some of the short rhymes in it seemed to me very well done. I remember in particular one that he had written about himself:

"Chatter, chatter, little Day!
 What a lot you've got to say—
 Umpty-thousand words a minute,
 Even your Maxim isn't in it!"

The turning of them suggested that he had a natural faculty for rhyming: and when next we met, he confessed that he did sometimes write verses, "lots of them, like Gilbert." But these diversions, he maintained, were not to be taken seriously. It was to be understood that he had the misfortune to be a creature of moods. He wrote verses hard for a bit, and then drew hard for a bit, and then did nothing at all for a bit, but sit still. He had to do things straight off and at full speed, or not at all.

About those moods of his, he was quite right. Things rushed up out of his mind with an irresistible impulse, and then stopped, until something else began to rush. Even in conversation the sparkling stream would sometimes stop quite dead, and he would drift away into rapt and inward contemplation of things that one was not told about. It was always so if the conversation, as conversations will in a mess, became dull or coarse. I think that then, without any conscious effort, he stopped hearing it, and began to attend inwardly to some jolly thing, some good joke, some adventure of the air, some memory of his river. He would sit by, leaning forward with an intent look, and give a little laugh now and then, as if he were listening to what was being said. But, in fact, he was listening only to his own jollier thoughts: and suddenly he would tumble back into the conversation with some perfectly inapposite remark, which came as a rebuke to the groundlings, effectual, though quite unintended.

In spite of his diffidence, the poetry that gleamed at times in his talk, and in his letters about the air and the country, made it clear that it was well worth while that he should take his verse-writing more seriously than he was yet inclined: so I urged him to write something about the air, not like Gilbert, but less burlesque. His answer was the poem printed in the CORNHILL. A month or two later came his second poem, "An Airman's Dream." This was all his own idea. It was written off at great speed; he enjoyed writing it tremendously; and always spoke of it with the most engaging admiration. Probably he would not have written it quite as he did but for Rupert Brooke's "Grantchester," which he greatly admired; but his poem has a freshness and vitality which "Grantchester" in its rather elaborate technical accomplishment seems to lack. His third and last considerable poem, the lines "To my brother," were written later, in France. There is a touch of deeper feeling in them that shows an increase of power.

I know that these three poems have given pleasure to many people; but I am unable to form any critical estimate of them myself. They speak so clearly and directly with his voice that a friend of his could no more analyse his affection for the verses than he could analyse his affection for their writer.

'His skill and daring were now a legend in our force. When strangers talked of great airmen elsewhere, we said "But you should see Day." This high reputation of his had the best of foundations, in the generous and open admiration of his own service. One day he came out to the farm with his immediate superior, Flight Commander K. Jeff was particularly riotous that day, and as he skirmished about the wood K. sat with me in the sun and told about Jeff's flying. Jeff was the finest pilot he had ever known. "A light scout machine, like a horse, needs the right sort of hands, and he has the best hands in the world. A great test—he can do things at slow speed that other people venture on with a rush only; and, of course," said K., echoing C., "he is absolutely 'all out.'" That was the quality in him that seemed always to strike others of his service as pre-eminent, that there was no reserve in his devotion. Others, even the best of officers, might sometimes slacken the bow, might shrink, if ever so little, from the great and incessant dangers of their service, might allow some distraction to mitigate a little their spirit of aggression. He never flagged or faltered, was never set on his duty, and more than his duty, with an intensity of purpose that was less than absolute. To be so, I think, cost him no conscious effort. Complete devotion was his by nature, with all the vigour and daring that for an airman it implied. To the serious and ardent spirit that lay beneath his gaiety, revealed to us by his verses only, and by flashes in his talk, self-interest and self-consideration were unknown. Half-hearted ways and people he did not actively condemn: they simply did not exist for him. He might perhaps say of some example of shirking that it was "perfectly bad"; but about such dead-alive things he did not trouble his head. All unknown to him, this single-mindedness of his made him a great source of strength in others. Bound to him by his loveliness, people shrank from any failure in his presence, lest they should trouble the serenity of his devotion. It would have been dreadful for one of his friends to have failed in duty under his eye. Jeff would have smiled at him in a puzzled way, suspecting a joke, would have been sadly bothered about him for a little, and would then have stopped thinking about him altogether, turning his thoughts to jollier things: and nobody that knew him could be indifferent to such an exclusion.

'His life at H. seemed to him too inactive, and he grew very

discontented with it. He knew—he could not help knowing—that he was in the front rank as a pilot, and he longed greatly for more active service. It could not have been otherwise. To a nature so ardent and resolute, frustration in the activity in which it feels itself most alive is the worst evil that can befall. So it was no surprise, when on return from leave in the autumn of 1917, I learnt that he had succeeded in getting himself transferred to a light cruiser, where there was promise of more to do.

‘He enjoyed being with the “proper Navy”; but it turned out that in his new work he had no better opportunities than before, and he was pleased when an accident to his ship sent him to the experimental air-station at G.

‘I saw him at G. on my way back to Flanders (whither I had been transferred) from leave in October 1917. When I arrived at the flying ground he was away in the air, and I waited for him at his shed. There was a senior warrant-officer in charge there, and it was amusing to learn from his talk how quickly a legend had grown up round Jeff at G., and how firmly his sway had become established. There was a fine flyer! the finest ever seen at G. To see him bank vertically in his scout!—and the other gentlemen had said it was impossible. Here he came now; you could always tell him by the way he flew.

‘The tiny machine floated down, and I, too, like the old warrant-officer, although I knew it was only our affection for the pilot that made us think so, had an illusion that there was something characteristically lively, light, and swift about its motion. As he brought the machine to earth, a puff of wind caught it, and he had to turn up again and, flying to one side, to land with something of a bump. The warrant officer looked aside and growled “You wouldn’t often see him land like that.” He could not bear that his idol should not be seen to the best advantage.

‘Perhaps it was the red and brown given to Jeff by the great winds in which he lived and the sparks that shone in his eyes, but his face always seemed to have something smouldering in it, a suggestion of internal fires that were ever on the point of breaking through in visible flames. On that day his look and talk were even more brilliantly alive than usual. The fresh interest of the difficult work that he was doing (making experiments with machines of novel types) had carried him up and away into complete absorption in the air. His thoughts and purposes inhabited a remote and high region whither a groundling could hardly follow them; and then with one of his swift changes he returned to earth, to talk of days that he had been spending at home on leave, of the river and the reeds, and of what he had seen at dawn and dusk on the great level of the fens. Now that he had realised in poetry his love for the

beauty of the world, he spake of these things with all a poet's confidence. They were the things worth caring about, and people who did not care about them were not for him. He spoke of people who "understood," and people who did not understand, meaning an understanding of the loveliness of the face of nature, and, less clearly and articulately perhaps, but not unconsciously, of the worth of everything in life that is "lovely and of good report."

'It was certain that he would never rest content with any service but the highest. Difficult as the work was at G., he was still longing for direct action with the enemy. By urgent requests, and by some audacity in acting upon a qualified assent as if it were unconditional, he managed to secure his transfer to a fighting squadron on the Western Front. My battery was not far away. In December I heard from him that he was coming, and soon afterwards that he had arrived.

'I found him next day in a company of famous pilots and observers. It was too soon after his arrival for his quality to have become known to them: and there had not yet been time for the legend to grow. "But that will not take long," I thought, and truly it did not. A series of brilliant fights and victories soon re-established the legend, and when I visited him again, a week later, he was back in the middle of the stage, the unconscious pattern of his company. Talking with other airmen there and round about, I found that to speak of him was ever to bind a common bond. One heard always the same thing, "a great pilot and absolutely 'all out'"; and as if they found the thought of him a happy and a heartening thing, and were glad to have the chance of paying in generous praise something of their debt to him for the cheerfulness and inspiration that he brought into their lives, they would turn the conversation back to him again and again.

'On Christmas Day he came up and had dinner with us in our dugout. We crawled about the top of the dunes to look at the trenches of the Germans, and when they began to shell us, he professed to find it very exciting. I said that one could not be expected to believe that he found anything exciting, after his experiences in the air; but he answered that he never now had any real excitement in the air at all. At moments of difficulty and danger, he explained, as if it were a matter of course, he found himself thinking harder and quicker than at other times, but that was the only difference. "It does seem a matter of course," I said to myself, "that Jeff should be above fear; because it is a matter of course that he should be Jeff; but it is equally a matter of course that other people should be different." I asked him, then, a question which before I had always been ashamed to ask: Did he never give a thought to the dangers of his service? He supposed,

he said, that he didn't. At school he had been an anxious little boy, always worrying about things. But as soon as he began to fly, he found that he stopped worrying or being anxious about anything. It was a difficult thing to believe, that Jeff had ever been anxious or worried; but I thought that I understood how it might have seemed so to him. His capacity for a burning intensity of purpose had been there in his school-days, and had worried him by its search for an outlet.

'There is a photograph of him as a little boy with a cricket bat that has caught perfectly his habitual expression, and in so open a countenance expression and character are one. The boy looks at you, and seems to say "What a ripping business it is, you and everybody and everything," and yet there is an air about him—one must not call it haughty, perhaps one may call it aloof—that says, too, "And now I hope you will get out of my way, and let me get on with the most ripping business of all, the business of being Jeff." Coupled with self-regarding impulses, such aloofness and concentration make the great successes of the common world; coupled as they were in him with impulses that are self-devoting, they make the hero or the saint. The air blew from his mind all the dusts of doubt, and fanned the hero in him into flames.

'A few weeks later I had to take down a railway truck to mount a new gun, and he came to see me in my van among the docks. His reputation was now high in his Wing, he had been made a Flight-Commander, and he had conspicuous victories to his credit. At last his work was the highest to be had, and gave him full scope for his capacities; so at last he was perfectly content. Fighting in the air, I heard, was the best thing in the world, and he talked of it so vividly that I could believe myself up there with him, wheeling and striking like a hawk at a heron. But his best pleasure, great craftsman that he was, was not in the mere animal exhilaration of the fights, it was in the art and craft of them. He dwelt most upon how good it was to have to think in a flash about all the different things that there were to do, and to invent in mid-flight new measures for new crises. That was, I suppose, the hall-mark of his genius as an airman; that, at the tremendous moments, he was even more in possession of himself than usual.

'We met once and twice again; and then in February, I was recalled from France, and he came to see me and to say good-bye. As I listened to the high confidence with which he spoke now of his service, I thought—he is like a prince that has come into his kingdom. It is so natural that we who love him should fear for him and long that his danger might be less, but knowing that his high nature is attaining here to perfect achievement, we wrong

him by our fears, and belittle our own love. The Jeff that we value so much has his being in the exercise of courage and devotion. To wish that he might have less opportunity for their exercise is to wish that he might be less Jeff. If he was to rise to this height, things could not have been otherwise, and we must be content as he is.

'I wondered then what motive or principle was the basis of his content in his devoted service. He used to talk little about abstract ideas; his sense of beauty was satisfied as yet with the beauty of material things, the sights and sounds of nature, and the happy states of mind that they induce. It was sure, however, that a mind so alert and fine had some strong relation with the ideas of patriotism and self-sacrifice, although unexpressed, perhaps, even to itself. So, although I knew I was going to bore him, I turned our conversation thither. He drifted away into silence, and we arrived at the gulf of a yawn. But then his attention suddenly returned, and he said, "That's quite all right. One feels as they did when there were dragons to fight." I, too, felt then that it was quite all right; and that his confession of faith was better than much elaborate reasoning and self-analysis.

'When he must go, we walked together down the trench to the corner at which his car was waiting. It was dark; but the flashing of the guns was bright enough to give me, for remembrance, a last picture of his noble head. "Good night. Good luck!" he said, and "Good night, dragon-slayer," said I; and he whirled away.'

His service, done in the spirit in which he did it, requires more valour and endurance than have ever been required of man before. He met the new call, and did more than meet it: he thrust ahead, and with his poet's fire lit a new beacon on the path of duty. The memory of him and of his fellow-knights will be the treasure of all English hearts in after time. We bear it in trust for them.

E. H. Y.

MOON OF ISRAEL.

A TALE OF THE EXODUS.

BY H. RIDER HAGGARD.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE DREAM OF MERAPI.

A WHILE went by; it may have been fourteen days, during which we heard that the Israelites had started on their journey. They were a mighty multitude who bore with them the coffin and the mummy of their prophet, a man of their blood, Vizier, it is reported, to that Pharaoh who welcomed them to Egypt hundreds of years before. Some said they went this way and some that, but Bakenkhonsu, who knew everything, declared that they were heading for the Lake of Crocodiles, which others name Sea of Reeds, whereby they would cross into the desert beyond, and thence to Syria. I asked him how, seeing that at its narrowest part this lake was six thousand paces in width, and that the depth of its mud was unfathomable. He replied that he did not know, but that I might do well to inquire of the lady Merapi.

'So you have changed your mind, and also think her a witch,' I said, to which he answered:

'One must breathe the wind that blows, and Egypt is so full of witchcraft that it is difficult to say. Also it was she and no other who destroyed the ancient statue of Amon. Oh! yes, witch or no witch, it might be well to ask her how her people purpose to cross the Sea of Reeds, especially if Pharaoh's chariots chance to be behind them.'

So I did ask her, but she answered that she knew nothing of the matter, and wished to know nothing, seeing that she had separated from her people, and remained in Egypt.

Then Ki came, I know not whence, and having made his peace with Seti as to the dressing of Merapi in the robes of Isis which, he vowed, was done by the priests against his wish, told us that Pharaoh and a great host had started to pursue the Israelites. The Prince asked him why he had not gone with the host, to which

he replied that he was no soldier, also that Pharaoh hid his face from him. In return he asked the Prince why *he* had not gone.

Seti answered, because he had been deprived of his command with his other offices and had no wish to take share in this business as a private citizen.

'You are wise, as always, Prince,' said Ki.

It was on the following night, very late, while the Prince, Ki, Bakenkhonsu and I, Ana, sat talking, that suddenly the lady Merapi broke in upon us as she had risen from her bed, wild-eyed, and with her hair flowing down her robes.

'I have dreamed a dream!' she cried. 'I dreamed that I saw all the thousands of my people following after a flame that burned from earth to heaven. They came to the edge of a great water and behind them rushed Pharaoh and all the hosts of the Egyptians. Then my people ran on to the face of the water, and it bore them as though it were sound land. Now the soldiers of Pharaoh were following, but the gods of Egypt appeared, Amon, Osiris, Horus, Isis, Hathor, and the rest, and would have turned them back. Still they refused to listen, and dragging the gods with them, rushed out upon the water. Then darkness fell, and in the darkness sounds of wailing and of a mighty laughter. It passed, the moon rose, shining upon emptiness. I awoke, trembling in my limbs. Interpret me this dream if you can, O Ki, Master of Magic.'

'Where is the need, Lady,' he answered, awaking as though from sleep, 'when the dreamer is also the seer? Shall the pupil venture to instruct the teacher, or the novice to make plain the mysteries to the high-priestess of the temple? Nay, Lady, I and all the magicians of Egypt are beneath your feet.'

'Why will you ever mock me?' she said, and as she spoke she shivered.

Then Bakenkhonsu opened his lips, saying,

'The wisdom of Ki has been buried in a cloud of late, and gives no light to us, his disciples. Yet the meaning of this dream is plain, though whether it be also true I do not know. It is that all the host of Egypt, and with it the gods of Egypt, are threatened with destruction because of the Israelites, unless one to whom they will hearken can be found to turn them from some purpose that I do not understand. But to whom will the mad hearken, oh! to whom will they hearken?' and lifting his great head, he looked straight at the Prince.

'Not to me, I fear, who now am no one in Egypt,' said Seti.

'Why not to you, O Prince, who to-morrow may be everyone in Egypt?' asked Bakenkhonsu. 'Always you have pleaded the cause of the Hebrews, and said that naught but evil would befall Egypt because of them, as has happened. To whom, then, will the people and the army listen more readily?'

'Moreover, O Prince,' broke in Ki, 'a lady of your household has dreamed a very evil dream, of which, if naught is said, it might be held that it was no dream, but a spell of power aimed against the majesty of Egypt; such a spell as that which cast great Amon from his throne, such a spell as that which has set a magic fence around this house and field.'

'Again I tell you that I weave no spells, O Ki, who with my own child have paid the price of them.'

'Yet spells were woven, Lady, and as has been known from of old, strength is perfected in sacrifice alone,' Ki answered darkly.

'Have done with your talk of spells, Magician,' exclaimed the Prince, 'or if you must speak of them, speak of your own, which are many. It was Jabez who protected us here against the plagues, and the statue of Amon was shattered by some god.'

'I ask your pardon, Prince,' said Ki bowing, 'it was *not* this lady but her uncle who fenced your house against the plagues which ravaged Egypt, and it was *not* this lady but some god working in her which overthrew Amon of Tanis. The Prince has said it. Yet this lady has dreamed a certain dream which Bakenkhonsu has interpreted although I cannot, and I think that Pharaoh and his captains should be told of the dream, that on it they may form their own judgment.'

'Then why do you not tell them, Ki?'

'It has pleased Pharaoh, O Prince, to dismiss me from his service as one who failed and to give my office of Kherheb to another. If I appear before the face of Pharaoh I shall be killed.'

Now I, Ana, listening, wished that Ki would appear before the face of Pharaoh, although I did not believe that he could be killed by him or by anybody else, since against death he had charms. For I was afraid of Ki, and felt in myself that again he was plotting evil to Merapi whom I knew to be innocent.

The Prince walked up and down the chamber as was his fashion when lost in thought. Presently he stopped opposite to me and said,

'Friend Ana, be pleased to command that my chariots be made ready with a general's escort of a hundred men, and spare horses

to each chariot. We ride at dawn, you and I, to seek out the army of Pharaoh and pray audience of Pharaoh.'

'My lord,' said Merapi in a kind of cry, 'I pray you go not, leaving me alone.'

'Why should I leave you, Lady? Come with me if you will.' She shook her head, saying,

'I dare not. Prince, there has been some charm upon me of late that draws me back to my own people. Twice in the night I have awakened and found myself in the gardens with my face set towards the north, and heard a voice in my ears, even that of my father who is dead, saying,

"Moon of Israel, thy people wander in the wilderness and need thy light."

'It is certain therefore that if I came near to them I should be dragged down as wood is dragged of an eddy, nor would Egypt see me any more.'

'Then I pray you bide where you are, Merapi,' said the Prince, laughing a little, 'since it is certain that where you go I must follow, who have no desire to wander in the wilderness with your Hebrew folk. Well, it seems that as you do not wish to leave Memphis and will not come with me, I must stay with you.'

Ki fixed his piercing eyes upon the pair of them.

'Let the Prince forgive me,' he said, 'but I swear it by the gods that never did I think to live to hear the Prince Seti Meneptah set a woman's whims before his honour.'

'Your words are rough,' said Seti, drawing himself up, 'and had they been spoken in other days, mayhap, Ki——'

'Oh! my lord,' said Ki, prostrating himself till his forehead touched the ground, 'bethink you then how great must be the need which makes me dare to speak them. When first I came hither from the court of Tanis, the spirit that is within me speaking through my lips gave certain titles to your Highness, for which your Highness was pleased to reprove me. Yet the spirit in me cannot lie and I know well, and bid all here make record of my words, that to-night I stand in the presence of him who ere two moons have passed will be crowned Pharaoh.'

'Truly you were ever a bearer of ill-tidings, Ki, but if so, what of it?'

'This, your Highness: Were it not that the spirits of Truth and Right compel me for their own reasons, should I, who have blood that can be shed or bones that can be broken, dare to hurl hard words

at him who will be Pharaoh ? Should I dare to cross the will of the sweet dove who nestles on his heart, the wise, white dove that murmurs the mysteries of heaven, whence she came, and is stronger than the vulture of Isis and swifter than the hawk of Ra ; the dove that, were she angry, could rend me into more fragments than did Set Osiris ?'

Now I saw Bakenkhonsu begin to swell with inward laughter like a frog about to croak, but Seti answered in a weary voice,

'By all the birds of Egypt with the sacred crocodiles thrown in, I do not know, since that mind of yours, Ki, is not an open writing which can be read by the passer-by. Still, if you would tell me what is the reason with which the goddesses of Truth and Justice have inspired you——'

'The reason is, O Prince, that the fate of all Egypt's army may be hidden in your hand. The time is short and I will be plain. Deny it as she will, this lady here, who seems to be but a thing of love and beauty, is the greatest sorceress in Egypt, as I whom she has mastered know well. She matched herself against the high god of Egypt and smote him to the dust, and has paid back upon him, his prophets, and his worshippers the ills that he would have worked to her, as in a like case any of our brotherhood would do. Now she has dreamed a dream, or her spirit has told her that the army of Egypt is in danger of destruction, and I know that this dream is true. Hasten then, O Prince, to save the hosts of Egypt, which you will surely need when you come to sit upon its throne.'

'I am no sorceress,' cried Merapi, 'and yet—alas ! that I must say it—this smiling-featured, cold-eyed wizard's words are true. *The sword of death hangs over the hosts of Egypt !*'

'Command that the chariots be made ready,' said Seti again.

Eight days had gone by. It was sunset and we drew rein over against the Sea of Reeds. Day and night we had followed the army of Pharaoh across the wilderness on a road beaten down by his chariot wheels and soldiers, and by the tens of thousands of the Israelites who had passed that way before them. Now from the ridge where we had halted we saw it encamped beneath us, a very great army. Moreover, stragglers told us that beyond, also encamped, was the countless horde of the Israelites, and beyond these the vast Sea of Reeds which barred their path. But we could not see the Israelites or the water on the further side of them for a very strange reason. Between these and the army of Pharaoh rose a black

wall of cloud, built as it were from earth to heaven. One of those stragglers of whom I have spoken, told us that this cloud travelled before the Israelites by day, but at night was turned into a pillar of fire. Only on this day, when the army of Pharaoh approached, it had moved round and come between the people of Israel and the army.

Now when the Prince, Bakenkhonsu, and I heard these things we looked at each other and were silent. Only presently the Prince laughed a little, and said,

'We should have brought Ki with us, even if we had to carry him bound, that he might interpret this marvel, for it is sure that no one else can.'

'It would be hard to keep Ki bound, Prince, if he wished to go free,' answered Bakenkhonsu. 'Moreover, before ever we entered the chariots at Memphis he had departed south for Thebes. I saw him go.'

'And I gave orders that he should not be allowed to return, for I hold him an ill guest, or so thinks the lady Merapi,' replied Seti with a sigh.

'Now that we are here what would the Prince do?' I asked.

'Descend to the camp of Pharaoh and say what we have to say, Ana.'

'And if he will not listen, Prince?'

'Then cry our message aloud and return.'

'And if he will not suffer us to return, Prince?'

'Then stand still and live or die as the gods may decree.'

'Truly our lord has a great heart!' exclaimed Bakenkhonsu, 'and though I feel over young to die, I am minded to see the end of this matter with him,' and he laughed aloud.

But I who was afraid thought that *O-ho-ho* of his, which the sky seemed to echo back upon our heads, a strange and indeed a fearful sound.

Then we put on robes of ceremony that we had brought with us, but neither swords nor armour, and having eaten some food, drove on with the half of our guard towards the place where we saw the banners of Pharaoh flying about his pavilion. The rest of our guard we left encamped, bidding them, if aught happened to us, to return and make report at Memphis and in the other great cities. As we drew near to the camp the outposts saw us and challenged. But when they perceived by the light of the setting sun who it was that they challenged, a murmur went through them, of—

'The Prince of Egypt! The Prince of Egypt!' for so they had never ceased to name Seti, and they saluted with their spears and let us pass.

So at length we came to the pavilion of Pharaoh, round about which a whole regiment stood on guard. The sides of it were looped up high because of the heat of the night which was great, and within sat Pharaoh, his captains, his councillors, his priests, his magicians, and many others at meat or serving food and drink. They sat at a table that was bent like a bow, with their faces towards the entrance, and Pharaoh was in the centre of the table with his fan-bearers and butlers behind him.

We advanced into the pavilion, the Prince in the centre, Bakenkhonsu leaning on his staff on the right hand, and I, wearing the gold chain that Pharaoh Meneptah had given me, on the left, but those with us remained among the guard at the entrance.

'Who are these,' asked Amenmeses, looking up, 'who come here unbidden?'

'Three citizens of Egypt who have a message for Pharaoh,' answered Seti in his quiet voice, 'which we have travelled fast and far to speak in time.'

'How are you named, citizens of Egypt, and who sends your message?'

'We are named, Seti Meneptah aforetime Prince of Egypt, and heir to its crown; Bakenkhonsu the aged Councillor, and Ana the scribe and King's Companion, and our message is from the gods.'

'We have heard those names, who has not?' said Pharaoh, and as he spoke all, or very nearly all, the company rose, or half rose, and bowed towards the Prince. 'Will you and your companions be seated and eat, Prince Seti Meneptah?'

'We thank the divine Pharaoh, but we have already eaten. Have we Pharaoh's leave to deliver our message?'

'Speak on, Prince.'

'O Pharaoh, many moons have gone by since last we looked upon each other face to face, on that day when my father, the good god Meneptah, disinherited me, and afterwards fled hence to Osiris. Pharaoh will remember why I was thus cut off from the royal root of Egypt. It was because of the matter of these Israelites, who in my judgment had been evilly dealt by, and should be suffered to leave our land. The good god Meneptah, being so advised by you and others, O Pharaoh, would have smitten the Israelites

with the sword, making an end of them, and to this he demanded my assent as the Heir of Egypt. I refused that assent and was cast out, and since then, you, O Pharaoh, have worn the double crown, while I have dwelt as a citizen of Memphis, living upon such lands and revenues as are my own. Between that hour and this, O Pharaoh, many griefs have smitten Egypt, and the last of them cost you your first-born, and me mine. Yet through them all, O Pharaoh, you have refused to let these Hebrews go, as I counselled should be done at the beginning. At length after the death of the first-born, your decree was issued that they might go. Yet now you follow them with a great army and purpose to do to them what my father, the good god Meneptah, would have done, had I consented, namely—to destroy them with the sword. Hear me, Pharaoh !’

‘ I hear ; also the case is well if briefly set. What else would the Prince Seti say ? ’

‘ This, O Pharaoh. That I pray you to return with all your host from the following of these Hebrews, not to-morrow or the next day, but at once—this night.’

‘ Why, O Prince ? ’

‘ Because of a certain dream that a lady of my household who is Hebrew has dreamed, which dream foretells destruction to thee and the army of Egypt, unless you hearken to these words of mine.’

‘ I think that we know of this snake whom you have taken to dwell in your bosom, whence it may spit poison upon Egypt. It is named Merapi, Moon of Israel, is it not ? ’

‘ That is the name of the lady who dreamed the dream,’ replied Seti in a cold voice, though I felt him tremble with anger at my side, ‘ the dream that if Pharaoh wills my companions here shall set out word for word to his magicians.’

‘ Pharaoh does not will it,’ shouted Amenmeses, smiting the board with his fist, ‘ because Pharaoh knows that it is but another trick to save these wizards and thieves from the doom that they have earned.’

‘ Am I then a worker of tricks, O Pharaoh ? If I had been such, why have I journeyed hither to give warning, when by sitting yonder at Memphis to-morrow, I might once more have become heir to the double crown ? For if you will not hearken to me, I tell you that very soon you shall be dead, and with you these’—and he pointed to all those who sat at table—‘ and with them the great army that lies without. Ere you speak, tell me, what is that black

cloud which stands before the camp of the Hebrews? Is there no answer? Then I will give the answer. It is the pall that shall wrap the bones of every one of you.'

Now the company shivered with fear, yes, even the priests and the magicians shivered. But Pharaoh went mad with rage. Springing from his seat, he snatched at the double crown upon his head, and hurled it to the ground, and I noted that the golden uræus band about it, rolled away, and rested upon Seti's sandalled foot. He tore his robes and shouted,

'At least our fate shall be your fate, renegade, who have sold Egypt to the Hebrew witch in payment of her kisses. Seize this man and his companions, and when we go down to battle against these Israelites to-morrow after the darkness lifts, let them be set with the captains of the van. So shall the truth be known at last.'

Thus Pharaoh commanded, and Seti, answering nothing, folded his arms upon his breast and waited.

Men rose from their seats as though to obey Pharaoh and sank back to them again. Guards started forward and yet remained standing where they were. Then Bakenkhonsu burst into one of his great laughs.

'O-ho-ho,' he laughed, 'Pharaohs have I seen come and go, one and two and three, and four and five, but never yet have I seen a Pharaoh whom none of his councillors or guards could obey however much they willed it. When you are Pharaoh, Prince Seti, may your luck be better. Your arm, Ana my friend, and lead on, Royal Heir of Egypt. The truth is shown to blind eyes that will not see. The word is spoken to deaf ears that will not hearken, and the duty done. Night falls. Sleep ye well, ye bidden of Osiris, sleep ye well!'

Then we turned and walked from that pavilion. At its entrance I looked back, and in the low light that precedes the darkness, it seemed to me as though all seated there were already dead. Blue were their faces and hollow shone their eyes, and from their lips there came no word. Only they stared at us as we went, and stared and stared again.

Without the door of the pavilion, by command of the Prince, I called aloud the substance of the lady Merapi's dream, and warned all within earshot to cease from following the people of Israel, if they would continue to live to look upon the sun. Yet even now, although to speak thus was treason against Pharaoh, none lifted a hand against the Prince, or against me his servant. Often since

then I have wondered why this was so, and found no answer to my questionings. Mayhap it was because of the majesty of my master, whom all knew to be the true Pharaoh, and loved at heart. Mayhap it was because they were sure that he would not have travelled so far and placed himself in the power of Amenmeses, save to work the armies of Egypt good, and not ill, and to bring them a message that had been spoken by the gods indeed.

Or mayhap it was because he was still hedged about by that protection which the Hebrews had vowed to him through their prophets with the voice of Jabez. At least so it happened. Pharaoh might command, but his servants would not obey. Moreover, the story spread, and that night many deserted from the host of Pharaoh and encamped about us, or fled back towards the cities whence they came. Also with them were not a few councillors and priests who had talked secretly with Bakenkhonsu. So it chanced that even if Pharaoh desired to make an end of us, as perhaps he purposed to do in the midnight watches, he thought it wisest to let the matter lie until he had finished with the people of Israel.

It was a very strange night, silent, with a heavy, stirless air. There were no stars, but the curtain of black cloud which seemed to hang beyond the camp of the Egyptians was alive with lightnings which appeared to shape themselves to letters that I could not read.

'Behold the Book of Fate written in fire by the hand of God!' said Bakenkhonsu, as he watched.

About midnight a mighty east wind began to blow, so strongly that we must lie upon our faces under the lee of the chariots. Then the wind died away and we heard tumult and shoutings, both from the camp of Egypt, and from the camp of Israel beyond the cloud. Next there came a shock as of earthquake, which threw those of us who were standing to the ground, and by a blood-red moon that now appeared we perceived that all the army of Pharaoh was beginning to move towards the sea.

'Whither go they?' I asked of the Prince who clung to my arm.

'To doom, I think,' he answered, 'but to what doom I do not know.'

After this we said no more, because we were too much afraid.

Dawn came at last, showing the most awful sight that was ever beheld by the eye of man.

The wall of cloud had disappeared, and in the clear light of the

morning, we perceived that the deep waters of the Sea of Reeds had divided themselves, leaving a wide roadway that seemed to have been cleared by the wind, or perchance to have been thrown up by the earthquake. Who can say? Not I who never set foot upon that path of death. Along this roadway streamed the tens of thousands of the Israelites, passing between the water on the right hand, and the water on the left, and after them followed all the army of Pharaoh, save those who had deserted, and stood or lay around us, watching. We could even see the golden chariots that marked the presence of Pharaoh himself, and of his bodyguard, deep in the heart of the broken host that struggled forward without discipline or order.

'What now? Oh! what now?' murmured Seti, and as he spoke there was a second shock of earthquake. Then on the west of the sea there arose a mighty wave, whereof the crest seemed to be high as a pyramid. It rolled forward with a curved and foaming head, and in the hollow of it for a moment, no more, we saw the army of Egypt. Yet in that moment I seemed to see mighty shapes fleeing landwards along the crest of the wave, which shapes I took to be the gods of Egypt, pursued by a form of light and glory that drove them as with a scourge. They came, they went, accompanied by a sound of wailing, and the wave fell.

But beyond it, the hordes of Israel still marched on towards the further shore.

Dense gloom followed, and through the gloom I saw, or thought I saw, Merapi, Moon of Israel, standing before us with a troubled face and heard or thought I heard her cry,

'Oh! help me, my lord Seti! Help me, my lord Seti!'

Then she too was gone.

'Harness the chariots!' cried Seti, in a hollow voice.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE CROWNING OF MERAPI.

FAST as sped our horses, rumour, or rather the truth, carried by those who had gone before us, flew faster. Oh! that journey was as a dream begotten by the evil gods. On we galloped through the day and through the night and lo! at every town and village women rushed upon us crying,

'Is it true, O travellers, is it true that Pharaoh and his host are perished in the sea?'

Then old Bakenkhonsu would call in answer,

'It is true that he who *was* Pharaoh and his host are perished in the sea. But lo! here is he who *is* Pharaoh,' and he pointed to the Prince, who took no heed and said nothing, save,

'On! On!'

Then forward we would plunge again till once more the sound of wailing died into silence.

It was sunset, and at length we drew near to the gates of Memphis. The Prince turned to me and spoke.

'Heretofore I have not dared to ask,' he said, 'but tell me, Ana. In the gloom after the great cliff of water fell and the shapes of terror swept by, did you seem to see a woman stand before us and did you seem to hear her speak?'

'I did, O Prince.'

'Who was that woman and what did she say?'

'She was one who bore a child to you, O Prince, which child is not, and she said "Oh! help me, my lord Seti. Help me, my lord Seti!"'

His face grew ashen even beneath its veil of dust, and he groaned.

'Two who loved her have seen and two who loved her have heard,' he said. 'There is no room for doubt. Ana, she is dead!'

'I pray the gods——'

'Pray not, for the gods of Egypt are also dead, slain by the god of Israel. Ana, who has murdered her?'

With my finger I who am a draughtsman drew in the thick dust that lay on the board of the chariot the brows of a man and beneath them two deep eyes. The gilt on the board where the sun caught it looked like light in the eyes.

The Prince nodded and said,

'Now we shall learn whether great magicians such as Ki can die like other men. Yes, if need be, to learn that I will put on Pharaoh's crown.'

We halted at the gates of Memphis. They were shut and barred, but from within the vast city rose a sound of tumult.

'Open!' cried the Prince to the guard.

'Who bids me open?' answered the captain of the gate peering at us, for the low sun lay behind.

'Pharaoh bids you open.'

'Pharaoh!' said the man. 'We have sure tidings that Pharaoh and his armies are slain by wizardry in the sea.'

'Fool!' thundered the Prince, 'Pharaoh never dies. The good god Seti Meneptah who is Pharaoh bids you open.'

Then the bronze gates rolled back, and those who guarded them prostrated themselves in the dust.

'Man,' I called to the captain, 'what means yonder shouting?'

'Sir,' he answered, 'I do not know, but I am told that the witch who has brought woe on Egypt and by magic caused the death of Pharaoh Amenmeses and his squadrons dies by fire in the place before the temple.'

'By whose command?' I cried again as the charioteer flogged the horses, but no answer reached our ears.

We rushed on up the wide street to the great place that was packed with tens of thousands of the people. We drove the horses at them.

'Way for Pharaoh! Way for the Mighty One, the good god, Seti Meneptah, King of the Upper and the Lower Land!' shouted the escort.

The people turned and saw the tall shape of the Prince still clad in the robes of state which he had worn when he stood before Amenmeses in the pavilion by the sea.

'Pharaoh! Pharaoh! Hail to Pharaoh!' they cried, prostrating themselves, and the cry passed on through Memphis like a wind.

Now we were come to the centre of the place, and there in front of the great gates of the temple burned a vast pyre of wood. Before the pyre moved figures, in one of whom I knew Ki dressed in his magician's robe. Outside of these was a double circle of soldiers who kept the people back, which these needed, for they raved like madmen and shook their fists. A group of priests near the fire separated, and I saw that among them stood a man and a woman, the latter with dishevelled hair and torn robes as though she had been roughly handled. At this moment her strength seemed to fail her and she sank to the ground, lifting her face as she did so. It was the face of Merapi, Moon of Israel.

So she was not dead. The man at her side stooped as though to lift her up, but a stone thrown out of the shadow struck him in the back and caused him to straighten himself, which he did with a curse at the thrower. I knew the voice at once, although the speaker was disguised.

It was that of Laban the Israelite, he who had been betrothed to Merapi, and had striven to murder us in the land of Goshen. What did he here? I wondered dimly.

Ki was speaking. 'Hark how the Hebrew cat spits,' he said. 'Well, the cause has been tried and the verdict given, and I think that the familiar should feed the flames before the witch. Watch him now, and perhaps he will change into something else.'

All this he said, smiling in his usual pleasant fashion, even when he made a sign to certain black, temple slaves who stood near. They leapt forward, and I saw the firelight shine upon their copper armlets as they gripped Laban. He fought furiously, shouting,

'Where are your armies, Egyptians, and where is your dog of a Pharaoh? Go dig them from the Sea of Reeds. Farewell, Moon of Israel. Look how your royal lover crowns you at the last, O faithless——'

He said no more, for at this moment the slaves hurled him headlong into the heart of the fire, which blackened for a little and burned bright again.

Then it was that Merapi struggled to her feet and cried in a ringing voice those very words which the Prince and I had seemed to hear her speak far away by the Sea of Reeds — 'Oh! help me, my lord Seti! Help me, my lord Seti!' Yes, the same words which had echoed in our ears days before they passed her lips, or so we believed.

Now all this while our chariots had been forcing their way foot by foot through the wall of the watching crowd, perhaps while a man might count a hundred, no more. As the echoes of her cry died away at length we were through and leaping to the ground.

'The witch calls on one who sups to-night at the board of Osiris with Pharaoh and his host,' sneered Ki. 'Well, let her go to seek him there if the guardian gods will suffer it,' and again he made a sign to the black slaves.

But Merapi had seen or felt Seti advancing from the shadows and flung herself upon his breast. He kissed her on the brow before them all, then bade me hold her up and turned to face the people.

'Bow down. Bow down. Bow down!' cried the deep voice of Bakenkhonsu. 'Life! Blood! Strength! Pharaoh! Pharaoh! Pharaoh!' and what he said the escort echoed.

Then of a sudden the multitude understood. To their knees they fell and from every side rose the ancient salutation. Seti

held up his hand and blessed them. Watching, I saw, Ki slip towards the darkness, and whispered a word to the guards, who sprang upon him and brought him back.

Then the Prince spoke :

‘Ye name me Pharaoh, people of Memphis, and Pharaoh I fear I am by descent of blood to-day, though whether I will consent to bear the burdens of government, should Egypt wish it of me, as yet I know not. Still he who wore the double crown is, I believe, dead in the midst of the sea ; at the least I saw the waters overwhelm him and his army. Therefore, if only for an hour, I will be Pharaoh, that as Pharaoh I may judge of certain matters. Lady Merapi, tell me, I pray you, how came you to this pass ?’

‘My lord,’ she answered, in a low voice, ‘after you had gone to warn the army of Pharaoh because of that dream I dreamed, Ki, who departed on the same day, returned again. Through one of the women of the household, over whom he had power, or so I think, he obtained access to me when I was alone in my chamber. There he made me this offer :

“Give me,” he said, “the secret of your magic that I may be avenged upon the wizards of the Hebrews who have brought about my downfall, and upon the Hebrews themselves, and also upon all my other enemies, and thus once more become the greatest man in Egypt. In turn I will fulfil all your desires, and make you, and no other, Queen of Egypt, and be your faithful servant, and that of your lord Seti who shall be Pharaoh, until the end of your lives. Refuse, and I will stir up the people against you, and before ever the Prince returns, if he returns at all, they who believe you to be an evil sorceress shall mete out to you the fate of a sorceress.”

‘My lord, I answered to Ki what I had often told him before, that I had no magic to reveal to him, I who knew nothing of the black arts of sorcery, seeing that it was not I who destroyed the statue of Amon in the temple at Tanis, but that same Power which since then has brought all the plagues on Egypt. I said, too, that I cared nothing for the gifts he offered to me, as I had no wish to be Queen of Egypt. My lord, he laughed in my face, saying I should find that he was one ill to mock, as others had found before me. Then he pointed at me with his wand and muttered some spell over me, which seemed to numb my limbs and voice, holding me helpless till he had been gone a long while, and could not be found by your servants, whom I commanded in your name to seize and keep him till your return.

'From that hour the people began to threaten me. They crowded about the palace gates in thousands, crying day and night that they were going to kill me, the witch. I prayed for help, but from me, a sinner, heaven has grown so far away that my prayers seem to fall back unheard upon my head. Even the servants in the palace turned against me, and would not look upon my face. I grew mad with fear and loneliness, since all fled before me. At last one night towards the dawn I went on to the terrace, and since no god would hear me, I turned towards the north whither I knew that you had gone, and cried to you to help me in those same words which I cried again just now before you appeared.' (Here the Prince looked at me and I Ana looked at him.) 'Then it was that from among the bushes of the garden appeared a man, hidden in a long, sheepskin cloak, so that I could not see his face, who said to me,

"Moon of Israel, I have been sent by his Highness, the Prince Seti, to tell you that you are in danger of your life, as he is in danger of his, wherefore cannot come to you. His command is that you come to him, that together you may flee away out of Egypt to a land where you will both be safe until all these troubles are finished.'

"How know I that you of the veiled face are a true messenger?" I asked. "Give me a sign."

'Then he held out to me that scarabæus of lapis-lazuli which your Highness gave to me far away in the land of Goshen, the same that you asked back from me as a love token when we plighted troth, and you gave me your royal ring, which scarabæus I had seen in your robe when you drove away with Ana.'

'I lost it on our journey to the Sea of Reeds, but said nothing of it to you, Ana, because I thought the omen evil, having dreamed in the night that Ki appeared and stole it from me,' whispered the Prince to me.

"It is not enough," I answered. "This jewel may have been thieved away, or snatched from the dead body of the Prince, or taken from him by magic."

'The cloaked man thought a while and said, "This night, not an hour ago, Pharaoh and his chariots were overwhelmed in the Sea of Reeds. Let that serve as a sign."

"How can this be?" I answered, "since the Sea of Reeds is far away, and such tidings cannot travel thence in an hour. Get you gone, false tempter."

"Yet it is so," he answered.

" "When you prove it to me, I will believe, and come."

" "Good," he said, and was gone.

*Next day a rumour began to run that this awful thing had happened. It grew stronger and stronger, until all swore that it had happened. Now the fury of the people rose against me, and they ravened round the palace like lions of the desert, roaring for my blood. Yet it was as though they could not enter here, since whenever they rushed at the gates or walls, they fell back again, for some spirit seemed to protect the place. The days went by; the night came again, and at the dawn, this dawn that is past, once more I stood upon the terrace, and once more the cloaked man appeared from among the trees.

" "Now you have heard, Moon of Israel," he said, "and now you must believe and come, although you think yourself safe because at the beginning of the plagues this, the home of Seti, was enchanted against evil, so that none within it can be harmed."

" "I have heard, and I think that I believe, though how the tidings reached Memphis in an hour I do not understand. Yet, stranger, I say to you that it is not enough."

'Then the man drew a papyrus roll from his bosom and threw it at my feet. I opened it and read. The writing was the writing of Ana as I knew well, and the signature was the signature of you, my lord, and it was sealed with your seal, and with the seal of Bakenkhonsu as a witness. Here it is,' and from the breast of her garment, she drew out the roll and gave it to me upon whom she rested all this while.

I opened it, and by the light of torches the Prince, Bakenkhonsu, and I read. It was as she had told us in what seemed to be my writing, and signed and sealed as she had said. The words ran:

'To Merapi, Moon of Israel, in my house at Memphis.

'Come, Lady, Flower of Love, to me your lord, to whom the bearer of this will guide you safely. Come at once, for I am in great danger, as you are, and together alone can we be safe.'

'Ana, what means this?' asked the Prince in a terrible voice. 'If you have betrayed me and her——'

'By the gods,' I began angrily, 'am I a man that I should live to hear even your Highness speak thus to me, or am I but a dog of the desert?'

I ceased, for at that moment Bakenkhonsu began to laugh.

'Look at the letter!' he laughed. Look at the letter.'

We looked, and as we looked, behold the writing on it turned

first to the colour of blood and then faded away, till presently there was nothing in my hand but a blank sheet of papyrus.

'Oho-ho!' laughed Bakenkhonsu. 'Truly, friend Ki, you are the first of magicians, save those prophets of the Israelites who have brought you—Whither have they brought you, friend Ki?'

Then for the first time the painted smile left the face of Ki, and it became like a block of stone in which were set two angry jewels that were his eyes.

'Continue, Lady,' said the Prince.

'I obeyed the letter. I fled away with the man who said he had a chariot waiting. We passed out by the little gate.

'“Where is the chariot?” I asked.

'“We go by boat,” he answered, and led the way towards the river. As we threaded the big palm grove men appeared from between the trees.

'“You have betrayed me,” I cried.

'“Nay,” he answered, “I am myself betrayed.”

'Then for the first time I knew his voice for that of Laban.

'The men seized us; at the head of them was Ki.

'“This is the witch,” he said, “who, her wickedness finished, flies with her Hebrew lover, who is also the familiar of her sorceries.”

'They tore the cloak and the false beard from him and there before me stood Laban. I cursed him to his face. But all he answered was,

'“Merapi, what I have done I did for love of you. It was my purpose to take you away to our people, for here I knew that they would kill you. This magician promised you to me if I could tempt you from the safety of the palace, in return for certain information that I have given him.”

'These were the only words that passed between us till the end. They dragged us to the secret prison of the great temple where we were separated. Here all day long Ki and the priests tormented me with questions, to which I gave no answer. Towards the evening they brought me out and led me here with Laban at my side. When the people saw me a great cry went up of “Sorceress! Hebrew witch!” They broke through the guard, they seized me, threw me to the ground and beat me. Laban strove to protect me but was torn away. At length the people were driven off, and oh! my lord, you know the rest. I have spoken truth, I can no more.'

So saying her knees loosened beneath her and she swooned. We bore her to the chariot.

'You have heard, Ki,' said the Prince. 'Now, what answer?'

'None, O Pharaoh,' he replied coldly, 'for Pharaoh you are, as I promised you should be. My spirit has deserted me, those Hebrews have stolen it away. That writing should have faded from the scroll as soon as it was read by yonder lady, and then I would have told you another story; a story of secret love, of betrayal and attempted flight with the lover. But some evil god kept it there until you also had read, you who knew that you had not written what appeared before your eyes. Pharaoh, I am conquered. Do your will with me, and farewell. Beloved you shall always be as you have always been, but happy never in this world.'

'O People,' cried Seti, 'I will not be judge in my own cause. You have heard, do you judge. For this wizard, what reward?'

Then there went up a great cry of 'Death! Death by fire. The death he had made ready for the innocent!'

That was the end, but they told me afterwards that, when the great pyre had burned out, in it was found the head of Ki looking like a red-hot stone. When the sunlight fell on it, however, it crumbled and faded away, as the writing had faded from the roll. If this be true I do not know, who was not present at the time.

We bore Merapi to the palace. She lived but three days, she whose body and spirit were broken. The last time I saw her was when she sent for me not an hour before her death. She was lying in Seti's arms babbling to him of their child and looking very sweet and happy. She thanked me for my friendship, smiling the while in a way which showed me that she knew it was more than friendship, and bade me tend my master well until we all met again elsewhere. Then she gave me her hand to kiss and I went away weeping.

After she was dead a strange fancy took Seti. In the great hall of the palace he caused a golden throne to be put up, and on this throne he set her in regal garments, with pectoral and neckless of gems, crowned like a queen of Egypt, and thus he showed her to the lords of Memphis. Then he caused her to be embalmed and buried in a secret sepulchre, the place of which I have sworn never to reveal, but without any rites because she was not of the faith of Egypt.

There then she sleeps in her eternal house until the Day of Resurrection, and with her sleeps her little son.

It was within a moon of this funeral that the great ones of Egypt came to Memphis to name the Prince as Pharaoh, and with them came her Highness, the Queen Userti. I was present at the ceremony, which to me was very strange. There was the Vizier Nehesi; there was the high-priest Roi and with him many other priests; and there was even the old chamberlain Pambasa, pompous yet grovelling as before, although he had deserted the household of the Prince after his disinheritance for that of the Pharaoh Amenmeses. His appearance with his wand of office and long white beard, of which he was so proud because it was his own, drew from Seti the only laugh I had heard him utter for many weeks.

'So you are back again, Chamberlain Pambasa,' he said.

'O most Holy, O most Royal,' answered the old knave, 'has Pambasa, the grain of dust beneath your feet, ever deserted the House of Pharaoh, or that of him who will be Pharaoh?'

'No,' replied Seti, 'it is only when you think that he will not be Pharaoh that you desert. Well, get you to your duties, rogue, who perhaps at bottom are as honest as the rest.'

Then followed the great and ancient ceremony of the Offering of the Crown, in which spoke priests disguised as gods and other priests disguised as mighty Pharaohs of the past; also the nobles of the Nomes and the chief men of cities. When all had finished Seti answered:

'I take this, my heritage,' and he touched the double crown, 'not because I desire it but because it is my heritage, and I know that while I live I must do my duty, as I swore that I would to one who has departed. Blow upon blow has smitten Egypt which, I think, had my voice been listened to, would never have fallen. Egypt lies bleeding and well-nigh dead. Let it be your work and mine to try to nurse her back to life. For no long while am I with you, who also have been smitten, how it matters not, yet while I am here, I who seem to reign will be your servant and that of Egypt. It is my decree that no feasts or ceremonial shall mark this, my accession, and that the wealth which would have been scattered upon them shall be distributed among the widows and the children of those who perished in the Sea of Reeds. Depart!'

They went, humble yet happy, since here was a Pharaoh who knew the needs of Egypt, one too who loved her and who alone had shown himself wise of heart while others were filled with madness. Then her Highness entered, splendidly appalled, crowned and followed by her household, and made obeisance.

'Greeting to Pharaoh,' she cried.

'Greeting to the Royal Princess of Egypt,' he answered.

'Nay, Pharaoh, the Queen of Egypt.'

By Seti's side there was another throne, that in which he had set dead Merapi with the crown upon her head. He turned and looked at it a while. Then he said,

'I see that this seat is empty. Let the Queen of Egypt take her place here if so she wills.'

She stared at him as if she thought that he was mad, though doubtless she had heard something of that story, then swept up the steps and set herself down in the royal chair.

'Your Majesty has been long absent,' said Seti.

'Yes,' she answered, 'but as my Majesty promised she would do, she has returned to her lawful place at the side of Pharaoh never to leave it more.'

'Pharaoh thanks her Majesty,' said Seti, bowing low.

Some six years had gone by, when one night I was seated with the Pharaoh Seti Menepthah in his palace at Memphis, for there he always chose to dwell when matters of State allowed.

It was on the anniversary of the Death of the First-born, and of this matter it pleased him to talk to me. Up and down the chamber he walked and, watching him by the lamplight, I noted that of a sudden he seemed to have grown much older, and that his face had become sweeter even than it was before. He was more thin also, and his eyes had in them a look of one who stares at distances.

'You remember that night, Friend, do you not,' he said; 'perhaps the most terrible night the world has ever seen, at least in the little piece of it called Egypt.' He stopped, lifted a curtain, and pointed to a spot on the pillared portico without. 'There she sat,' he went on; 'there you stood; there lay the boy and there crouched his nurse—by the way, I grieve to hear that she is ill. You are caring for her, are you not, Ana? Say to her that Pharaoh will come to visit her—when he may, when he may.'

'I remember it all, Pharaoh.'

'Yes, of course you would remember, because you loved her, did you not, and the boy too, and even me, the father. And so you will love us always when we reach a land where sex and its walls and fires are forgotten, and love and love alone survives.'

'Yes,' I answered, 'since love is the key of life, and those alone are accursed who have never learned to love.'

'Why, accursed, Ana, seeing that, if life continues, they still may learn?' He paused a while, then went on: 'I am glad that he died, Ana, although had he lived, as the Queen will have no children, he might have become Pharaoh after me. But what is it to be Pharaoh? For six years now I have reigned, and I think that I am beloved, reigned over a broken land which I have striven to bind together, reigned over a sick land which I have striven to heal, reigned over a desolated land which I have striven to make forget. Oh! the curse of those Hebrews worked well. And I think that it was my fault, Ana, for had I been more of a man, instead of casting aside my burden, I should have stood up against my father Menepthah and his policy and, if need were, have raised the people. Then the Israelites would have gone, and no plagues would have smitten Egypt. Well, what I did, I did because I must, perhaps, and what has happened, has happened. And now my time comes to an end, and I go hence to balance my account as best I may, praying that I may find judges who understand—and are gentle.'

'Why does Pharaoh speak thus?' I asked,

'I do not know, Ana, yet that Hebrew wife of mine has been much in my mind of late. She was wise in her way, as wise as loving, was she not, and if we could see her once again, perhaps she could answer the question. But although she seems so near to me, I never can see her, quite. Can you, Ana?'

'No, Pharaoh, though one night old Bakenkhonsu vowed that he perceived her passing before us, and looking at me earnestly.'

'Ah! Bakenkhonsu. Well, he is wise too, and loved her in his fashion. Also the flesh fades from him, though mayhap he will live to make offerings at both our tombs. Well, Bakenkhonsu is at Tanis, or is it at Thebes, with her Majesty, whom he ever loves to observe, as I do. So he can tell us nothing of what he thought he saw. This chamber is hot, Ana, let us stand without.'

So we passed the curtain, and stood upon the portico, looking at the garden misty with moonlight, and talking of this and that—about the Israelites, I think, who, as we had heard, were wandering in the deserts of Sinai. Then of a sudden we grew silent, both of us.

A cloud floated over the face of the moon, leaving the world in darkness. It passed, and I became aware that we were no longer alone. There in front of us was a mat, and on the mat lay a dead child, the royal child named Seti; there by the mat stood a woman

with agony in her eyes, looking at the dead child, the Hebrew woman named Merapi.

Seti touched me, and pointed to her, and I pointed to the child. We stood breathless. Then of a sudden, stooping down, she lifted up the child and held it towards its father. But, lo ! now no longer was it dead ; nay, it laughed and laughed, and seeing him, seemed to throw his arms about his neck, and to kiss him on the lips. Moreover, the agony in the woman's eyes turned to joy unspeakable, and she became more beautiful than a star. Then, laughing like the child, she turned to Seti, beckoned, and was gone.

'We have seen the dead,' he said to me presently, 'and, oh ! Ana, *the dead still live !*'

That night, ere dawn, a cry rang through the palace, waking me from my sleep. This was the cry :

'The good god Pharaoh is no more ! The hawk Seti has flown to heaven !'

At the burial of Pharaoh, I laid the halves of the broken cup upon his breast, that he might drink therefrom in the Day of Resurrection.

Here ends the writing of the Scribe Ana, the Companion of the King, by him beloved.

THE END.

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